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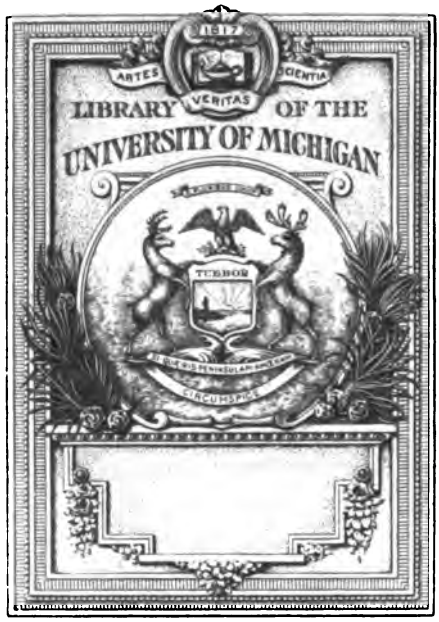
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VALLEY OF EYNOOMAH, ARABIA.

TRAVELS

TO THE

CITY OF THE CALIPHS,

ALONG THE SHORES

OF THE

PERSIAN GULF

AND

THE MEDITERRANEAN.

INCLUDING A

VOYAGE TO THE COAST OF ARABIA,

AND A

TOUR ON THE ISLAND OF SOCOTRA.

By J. R. WELLSTED, Esq., F.R.S., F.R.A.S., &c. &c.

AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN ARABIA."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1840.

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Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

TO

ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES MALCOLM,

LATE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE INDIAN NAVY,

AND

PRESIDENT OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF BOMBAY.

My Dear Sir:

Not so much on account of the great esteem with which I regard your private worth, nor the value which I attach to many years of private friendship, nor wholly either as a token of the high consideration with which myself and brother officers regard the impartial exercise of your public functions, do I dedicate these volumes to you. My object rather, by so trifling an offering, is to mark above all the sense which I in common with many others entertain of your zeal in the cause of geographical science.

Your efforts have never been relaxed during years when the existence of the Indian Navy has either been threatened with total annihilation, or subjected to mutations equally calculated to unhinge for the time the exertion and *esprit de corps* of its several members. No! although occasionally opposed by those who ought to have displayed a larger mind, you have, in the spirit of a service which could boast of a Cook, a Flinders, and a Parry, uniformly and unflinchingly fostered by strenuous encouragement, both public and private, the exertions of every individual which had for his object the extension of

29536

this branch of human knowledge. To yourself and your illustrious brother, Sir John Malcolm, the scientific world stand in a measure indebted for many of the late admirable Charts of the Eastern Seas, either originating at your recommendation, or executed under your directions.

To you, the Geographical Society of Bombay owes, if not its being, its after-existence; and permit me to add my humble tribute of congratulation to the spirited manner in which the sense of the same has been publicly manifested to you by this body. The pleasing recollection which this and other efforts in the cause of science must now afford, will sooth the tranquil hours you are, after so many years of unceasing service, enjoying; and whatever fate may have in store for you, whether thus to continue the even tenor of your way, or again to mingle in the active scenes of your glorious profession, you will carry with you the warm wishes of a host of friends, amidst which no one will at all times feel more proud and happy to number himself than

Yours most faithfully,

J. RAYMOND WELLSTED.

PREFACE.

This work owes its origin to the following circumstance. Lieut. Ormsby, of the Indian Navy, the hero of the first part of the work, voluntarily quitted that service at the early age of nineteen, and devoted himself for three years to traversing various portions of the East. The buoyancy of spirit with which every hardship encountered by my friend was surmounted; his courage, and zealous perseverance, where others, amidst pestilence and famine, would have shrunk back, and the facility with which he filled up the variety of characters it was necessary he should assume, are perhaps unequalled even amidst the per-

formances of the host of celebrated travellers to whom it has been the pride of Great Britain to have given birth. If the several incidents therefore are not portrayed with sufficient strength, the fault lies with the author and not the adventurer, whose graphic mode of relating many of the singular scenes which befel him in his wanderings, rendered his presence, during a brief sojourn in our native land, delightful to every society which he entered.

His adventures form the basis of the greater portion of the accompanying work; some of them were verbally detailed to me, others given in detached fragments of MS. recast and dovetailed together by myself.

Familiar with many of the scenes attempted to be described, much is added that I was myself in possession of, or could obtain from other sources; and in the performance of this task I have endeavoured to give the whole an oriental tone and colouring, which would breathe through the narrative the soul of a young and enthusiastic wanderer.

To myself, therefore, and not to my friend, belong any faults of arrangement, style, or diction. But it is necessary I should state that, however varying in hue from the colouring with which portions were originally portrayed, all the adventures ascribed to my enterprising friend are facts. His sudden departure for India compelled me to bring them to a more hasty conclusion than I could have wished. The second volume closes, therefore, with a portion far less interesting—a voyage of my own to South Arabia, and a tour on the Island of Socotra. The latter has already appeared in another form in one of the leading journals of the day.

The nature of the first part of this work precludes the hope of its being enabled to impart any great addition to our scientific knowledge, the object of the Author aiming rather at describing that which, relating to men and manners, has heretofore escaped the mere European; and I must rely on the same solitary claim of novelty, especially in

that portion of these pages relating to Socotra (which has been hitherto almost unknown), for all the attention or interest I can expect for that part of the work exclusively mine.

J. RAYMOND WELLSTED.

Athenæum, Jan. 18*th*, 1840.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

PERSIAN GULF.

CHAPTER I.

Page

Quit India—Reflections—Description of Vessel—Crew and their Amusements—Death of a Slave—Invention of the Compass—Persian Poetry—Abstinence from Spirituous Liquors 1

CHAPTER II.

Calm—Gales—Slave washed from the deck—The Hindu—Vessel fills—Arrival on the Arabian coast—Interview with the Beni-bu-Ali Bedowins—The first attack of the British on that people—their Defeat—Captain Thompson—Second expedition—Sir Lionel Smith—Reflections 19

CHAPTER III.

Arrival at Muscat—Description of that remarkable City—The Imam of Muscat—Importance of forming a

Page

more close political connexion with him—The Author engages as a Slave Merchant—Quits Muscat, and sails for Gambrun—Description of the entrance to, and Islands within, the Persian Gulf 45

CHAPTER IV.

Description of Gambrun, ancient and modern—Sickness of the Slaves—Quit Gambrun, and proceed towards the Interior—Hot Wells—Attempt at Assassination—Caravan plundered by a Persian Khan—Return to the Sea-coast 72

CHAPTER V.

Arrival at Gambrun—Embark for Ras el Khyma—Excessive Heat—Description of the Johasmi Pirates—History of a Pirate Chief—His singular Feats of Intrepidity—His Death—Power of the Sheikhs ... 93

CHAPTER VI.

Maude's group of Islets—Pearl Fishery—Mode of obtaining the Pearls—their probable Value—Commerce of Bahrain—Advantages of Position—Surveying Vessels—Fresh Water obtained from beneath the Salt ... 114

CHAPTER VII.

Arrival at Bushire—Stay there—Description of that City and its late Ruler—Karak—The importance of its Position considered—Approach Busrah—Description of Khan—Busrah—Its Inhabitants—Its Rulers and Government 130

CHAPTER VIII.

Page

Description of Busrah, continued—Its limits and extent —Unexpectedly meet with an old Acquaintance— Sudden disappearance of Rustom Beg—Is wounded, and returns—Undertake the Survey of the River Euphrates—Quit Bagdat—Koorna—Turkish Fleet— Its condition—Lieut. Lynch—Floods of the River— Sheikh Sook 148

CHAPTER IX.

Bedowin Encampment—Sheikh Jubber—Captured by Bedowins—Caution to English Travellers—Release 166

CHAPTER X.

Bedowins—Arabian Astronomy—Personal Characteristics—Patriarchal appearance — Amusements — Arab encampment 184

CHAPTER XI.

Quit Montafige Encampment—Semauva—Obtain possession of a Marble Statue—Robbed of it—Loss of Hadji's slippers—Lemlum Marshes—Robber Hordes —Breadth of River—Boat plundered—Visit Babylon —Reflections 201

CHAPTER XII.

Sepulchral remains—Arrives at Hillah, Description of —Babylon—Tower of Belus—Mugalibe—Rivers Tigris and Euphrates—Hye Canal—Ruins of Occur-Guff 218

CHAPTER XIII.

Page

Quit Bedowin Encampment for Bagdat—Optical Delusions—Tomb of Zobeide—Moving appearance of a Cafila—Author entertains his Bedowin Friends ... 236

CHAPTER XIV.

Bagdat, its Situation—Limits—Fortifications—Palaces—Mosques—Calenders—Baths—Gloom of Streets—Catching Dogs—Amusements—Dress—Population—Commerce—Government 254

CHAPTER XV.

Plague approaches Bagdat—Apathy—Sudden Alarm—Great Mortality—Robber Hordes—Mustapha's Wife murdered—Deaths of Nawaub and all his Household—Fearful Scene—City Flooded—Abdullah's Wife's Parting Scene—Quit Bagdat... 280

CHAPTER XVI.

Quit Bagdat—Mosque of Casmeen 303

CHAPTER XVII.

Departure from Hit—Kubbet-el-Marmora—Women yoked to the Plough—Incident—Arab Simplicity—Enter on Desert Journey—Alarm from Bedowins—Monotonous Travelling—Desert Fare—Vast Flocks of Birds—Gazelles—Simoon—Abyssinian Bruce ... 318

CHAPTER XVIII.

Arrival at Mucksureyeh—Appearance of Robbers—Ransom demanded—Ruins—Camel's Gate—Enter Damascus—Description of it—River Baraidy—Coffee Houses—Turkish Cemeteries 334

CHAPTER XIX.

Page

Damascus—Shawls and Sword-blades—Narrow Escape—Turkish Pacha—Dancing Boys—Caravan Pilgrimage—Bedowin Robbers, punishment of 350

CHAPTER XX.

Damascus revisited—Death of a Pacha—Capuchins—Visit Lebanon, its Cedars—Hurricane—Reflections. 368

CHAPTER XXI.

Arrive at Tripoli—Set out for Lebanon—Reflections there—Visit Baalbec 398

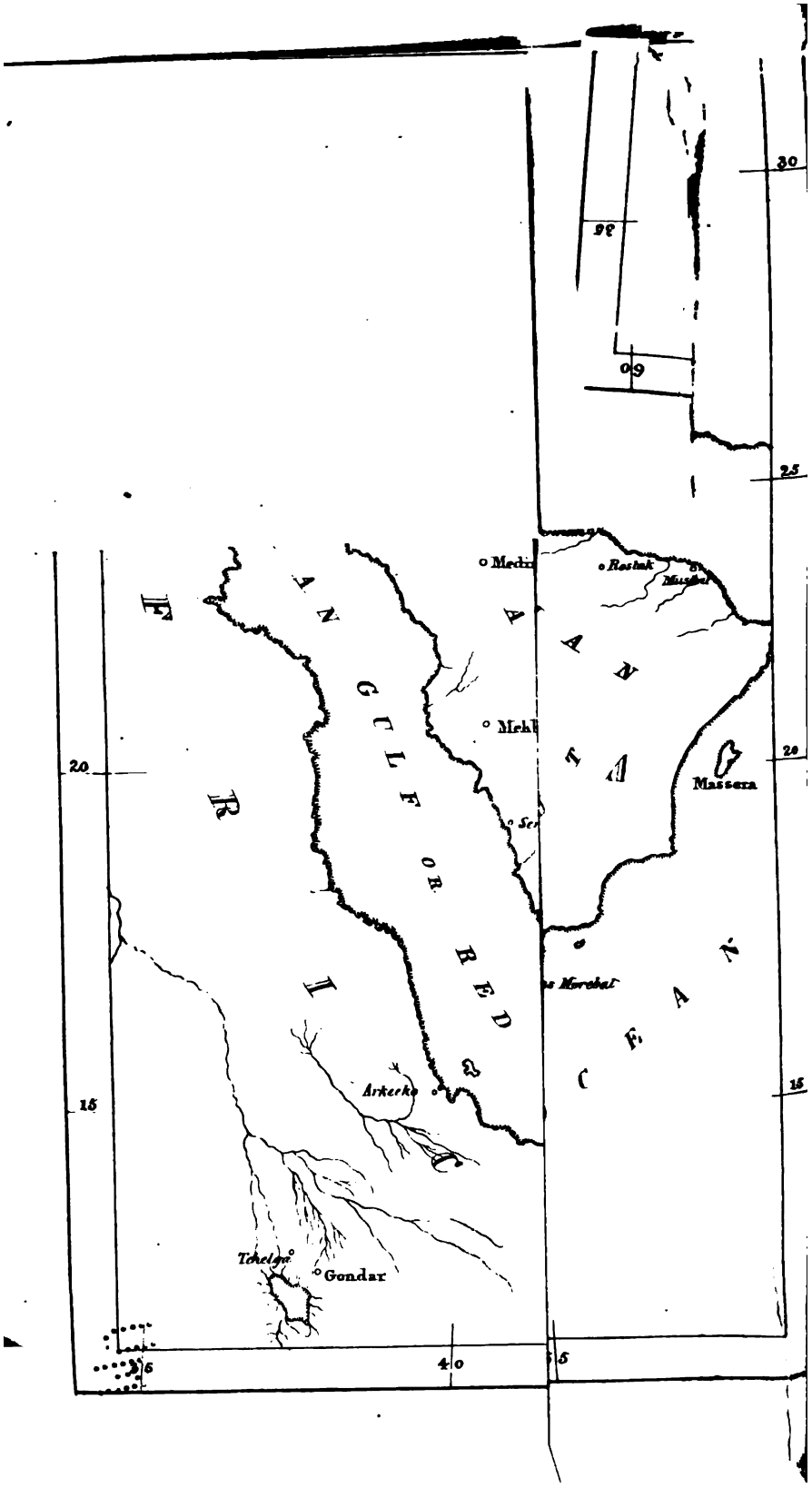
ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOLUME I.

Valley of Eynoonah, Arabia ..... *Frontispiece.*
Map of the Author's Route ..... page 1.

VOLUME II.

View from the Interior of Socotra.... *Frontispiece.*



30
25
20
15
Rostak
Massera
Arkeeko
Tchelga
Gondar
40

PERSIAN GULF.

CHAPTER I.

Quit India—Reflections—Description of Vessel—Crew and their Amusements—Death of a Slave—Invention of the Compass—Persian Poetry—Abstinence from Spirituous Liquors.

THE earliest years of my naval life were passed on the shores of Arabia. I saw much of its wild and roving inhabitants, and I panted to be away with them on their deserts: with the taste of a wanderer, is it surprising that I experienced the irksomeness and confinement of ships, or that I hailed with delight the permission obtained from the Indian government, to absent myself for a time from them?

In March 1830, I found myself on board one of those huge, unwieldy vessels, which, as in ancient times, laden with spices and with cloths of gold and tissue, still trade between India and

Arabia; we were bound for Muscat, our anchor was away, and we were soon clear of the shipping; every person on board had assembled to hoist our ponderous yard and enormous sail, accompanying these efforts by the beating of drums and other discordant sounds, to which the more excited shreiked and danced, and amidst the wild confusion the sail was seen gradually ascending the lofty mast, and gracefully unfolding its white bosom to the breeze. The bustle of parting was now hushed, while wafted by the freshening breeze we flew rapidly to the westward, and were soon to those we had bid adieu but as a white speck in the distance. At sun-set the blue ghauts of the Deccan were partially concealed beneath the eastern horizon, but their summits were still tinged with the golden hue of the setting sun.

The evening air was cool. I drew my cloak around me, and seated myself on the stern of the vessel to gaze on the shore, now rapidly receding from my view; on that shore I had found a second home; there had my brightest friendships been formed, and there my days of happiness very many: was I ever to renew either? was a question which, in my situation, gave rise to a long train of reflections, some of a

painful, others of a pleasing nature. I was a young wanderer, and alone; but my youthful imagination had always been deeply embued with an enthusiastic desire to visit the scenes to which I was now about to wend my way, and while communing with such thoughts, my first emotions at leaving all those who made life dear ebbed away, and I knew no solitude.

The East is a country of adventures; nowhere is travelling fraught with more danger nor possessed of more interest; here our steps lead over trackless deserts, or there we wander amidst the ruins of former cities which have been, and now are not; yet their mouldering ruins still last above all time, and lead us to ponder on the pages of history, which alone remain to record the purpose for which they were reared, the scenes they have commemorated or have witnessed. Travelling amidst such vestiges, in countries now but little known, hath other charms. Man is a creature most happy in a state of change, and the young and imaginative, before age shall have chilled the healthful enjoyment of novelty and truth, contemplate with fresh and vivid feelings every successive object their wanderings may bring before them. Wearied at length with such reflections, I laid myself on the deck and was soon asleep.

At the early dawn of day I was awakened by the Mahommedan call to prayer: the morning atmosphere was of a balmy freshness; no land was in sight, and I turned my eyes from gazing on the waste of waters around me to the vessel in which I had embarked, and my wild and strange companions. The bugalah "Shat-el-Frat," or the good ship Euphrates, was one of those large vessels of antique construction in which the Arabians continue to carry to their shores the precious merchandize of the East: she was registered a hundred, but carried twice that number of tons; her shape is that of a wedge, about eighty feet in length, and twenty-three at the extreme breadth; she was partially decked, had a poop, but the seams of neither were caulked, a sure indication that but little rain is experienced in those voyages. In order to admit of their striking the mast, which is done whenever they careen, or are laid up in harbour, the middle part of the vessel is either left open, or else closed by hatches; their spars are of great length: our mast was in one piece, and a little more than eighty feet, and the yard upwards of a hundred; a single sail of vast size is spread on these. Nothing which walks the waters has a more picturesque appearance than this description of vessel; from a distance, the

rounded swell of their snow-white sail has neither break nor shadow; the stern is high and richly carved, the prow low and projecting; in fine weather scarcely a ripple flows before them, and, like the beauteous and gentle swan, they hold their noiseless and graceful course. We were laden with various articles, such as "blue cloths and broider-work, and chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar." As in the days of Sinbad the sailor, every merchant embarks with his own venture, and I was probably the only passenger who had not a share in the freight, or in the vessel. Our captain was a Persian, who had made only two voyages; the Palinurus was a Hindoo—three sailors only (these were the cunning ones) who knew the compass from a block. "Yet they are all sailors," said the captain, "for they can swim."—"You might just as well, Ali Munsoor," replied I, "call them fishes." He smiled and offered me his pipe.

I have noticed the extreme beauty of these vessels when under sail, but out of the water they are the most unsightly and singular-looking craft which can be imagined; the breast-bone of a fowl gives an exact idea of a longitudinal and midship section of one. From whence they originally obtained their models I

and the day is ushered in with ceremonies similar to that of cocoa-nut day in India; at the conclusion of which they are again launched.

The property of these vessels is divided into shares, of which the captain, navigator, and perhaps helmsman, or those who go aloft, may severally have two, but the remainder of the crew but one. No regular wages are received by any; but on the return to port of one of these vessels, the owners, who retain the remainder of the shares, divide the profits, and take one half as their own, and then, after deducting the cost of the provisions which have been consumed on the voyage, distribute the remainder to the crew. All have wives, and most of them families, to support; and their earnings, about twenty dollars a-year, go to board their families in their absence. I never saw any with a dollar in their possession: they live very abstemiously, subsisting principally on durra (millet) bread, and probably a meal of rice, without butter, once a-week; to this we may add salt fish and a little coffee.

Amongst the ancients, in the earliest efforts of navigation, the life of a sailor was considered one of extreme hardship, and was consequently in very bad repute. In Arabia, in their strictest sense, it continues to be both to this day.

Our water was stowed in square wooden tanks, into which those desirous of helping themselves thrust a cocoa-nut shell, split in two, with a long wooden handle.

They bake their bread fresh every day, and a slave is constantly employed grinding the flour, which is done on an oblong stone, with a roller of the same material; then cakes are afterwards made and baked in an oven built up in the middle of the vessel. This is usually a large jar surrounded with brick-work, and their process is very simple. A few loose sticks are thrown in and lighted, and when the sides of the jar are sufficiently heated, the cakes are plastered to them, and are soon well done. Less fuel is required for this than for any other mode with which I am acquainted.

Arabia is wholly destitute of timber for ship-building, and these vessels are constructed on the Malabar coast; they have three sails—a large and small mainsail, and a storm-jib. Their canvas, cables, anchors, &c., come also from India.

How strange a transition from European to Asiatic manners has one brief day accomplished! Yesterday I was clad in the irksome, tight-fitting garb of my nation, surrounded by my countrymen and with attendants, placid and

servile; to-day I am sashed and turbaned, eating rice with my fingers, and considered by the haughty and intolerant race in whose society I am placed, as of an inferior and polluted order. Such situations, however, afford us a wholesome lesson, since they teach us how much we are capable of doing when thrown on our own resources. My first object was to endeavour to conciliate my companions, and to acquire a knowledge of their language. Although I have often heard a Moslem inquire, when well pleased with a Christian, "can it be possible that the Almighty—all good—can have created beings so wise and just for eternal perdition?" yet such, by the faith he professes, he is nevertheless bound to believe it. I therefore endeavoured, so far as outward demeanour went, by assimilating myself to their customs, and calling myself a Mahommedan, to remove this barrier to our better acquaintance—and I eventually succeeded.

All sea-voyages are, more or less, monotonous, but I found abundant amusement in thus employing myself, and very soon became reconciled to my new mode of life. The Asiatics, although fatalists, by an apparent incongruity of character, are extremely fond of resorting to divination and augury, and an inauspicious

event at the commencement of our voyage induced an old seer with a venerable white beard to prophesy an unfortunate termination to it. As subsequent events will show, he proved correct, and was, of course, elevated to a pseudo-prophet for the remainder of his life; nor let us too hastily condemn the credulity of his simple Moslem companions. In my native land second-sight was believed by the many on no better foundation; in both it appears that, in the midst of numerous predictions, some in the mere order of nature come to pass, and these being well attested, give a colouring of truth to the whole. The event which inspired our seer on this occasion was—a slave, who had been amusing himself with striving to catch the numerous water-snakes which were passing the vessel, at length succeeded in seizing one by the middle, but the creature reared its head and seized him by the fleshy part of the arm; he immediately relinquished his grasp and came up the vessel's side, but did not mention the circumstance for some hours afterwards: when I saw him he was in a state beyond the power of medicine: he died twenty-four hours after he was bitten. These snakes are particularly numerous on the coast of India; their size varies, the larger being found in the deeper

water. Until as late as the time of Niebuhr, sailors ascertained their approach to the Indian coast by the appearance of these snakes. Modern navigators have, however, independent of chronometers, a safer plan. It has been discovered that the number of fathoms in which they are found gives the distance in miles from the land.

This shelving bank is upwards of a hundred miles in width, and is, therefore, besides its singular formation, as regards magnitude, quite commensurate with the scale which has been assumed by nature in the vast continent against which it reclines. The mountains of Asia are of the loftiest, its plains the most extensive, and its rivers amidst the mightiest of the earth; for ages the two former have been subjected to the ceaseless and abrading action of the elements; trifling as may be the changes produced by this action in some countries, they are prodigious in India. In Egypt and Arabia the outline, nay, the very face of a hill, as is demonstrated from the existence of ancient inscriptions, shall remain but little altered from the earliest period to which our information reaches, but there no rain falls; while in India, for half the year, it falls uninterruptedly, not in showers, but in floods. The countless streams

with which the whole country is intersected are thus fed, and towards the conclusion of the season they become so swollen and rapid, that they not only carry with them much of the soil of the country through which they pass, but also its vegetation, and not unfrequently its trees. On one occasion, while cruising in the Bay of Bengal, the man at the mast-head reported an island to be in sight, and shortly afterwards from the deck we observed several trees; we steered towards them, and, upon approaching, discovered them to be a connected mass which had been washed away by some of the rivers, the roots being sufficiently numerous and matted to keep the whole together, while their weight retained them in their natural position.

The quantity of soil, and vegetation, which is thus carried by means of these rivers into the ocean, gradually, as their current loses its effect in the mass of waters, subsides and forms this bank, the extent of which, as I have already noticed, is in full proportion to the magnitude and power of the agents employed in its formation.

A considerable portion of my noviciate was passed in acquiring habits of smoking the boory. Coffee drunk in their fashion, without milk or

sugar, I took to very readily. The boory is simply a cocoa-nut shell, having an upright tube fixed in its centre; on the upper part of this, in a small earthern bowl, is placed the tobacco. A second tube is inserted in the side of the shell, and to this the devotee applies his mouth, inhaling, by powerful efforts, the tobacco into the lungs. Most hideous contortions of features accompany the operation. When not otherwise employed, my companions used a rosary similar to that we see in the hands of Roman Catholics; but some of the Soonee sect differ from other Mahomedans in having more or less than the ninety and nine. The whole are divided by small rings into three portions, and when either, in the course of their numeration, is arrived at, " bismallah," (in the name of the Lord,) escapes from their lips, and the same when they arrive at the fragment which adorns the extremity. Amber, coral, and various other substances, are used for these rosaries; but the neophite yussur is preferred to all, on account of its lightness and the polish which it bears.

If a manœuvre was to be executed on board, each had an assigned station, but all talked and gave orders together, excepting the captain, who never gave any at all. I inquired the reason—" Because if I did nobody would pay

attention to me." He was more courted for his store of tobacco and coffee, than for any influence as

"The monarch of a peopled deck."

He passed his time principally in smoking, sleeping, eating, and sipping coffee, on a mat and small carpet in the poop cabin, which, though equal in breadth to the vessel, was not more than three feet six inches high. After I had been on board a few days, I succeeded in winning his good graces, and a space similar in extent to his, bounded on the one hand (as geographers say) by some bales of coffee, and on the other by tubs of sugar-candy, which attracted hosts of flies during the day, and swarms of ants at night, nor was the apartment free from other insects as industrious as ants. But I soon acquired a Moslem-like indifference to such trifles. The Hindoo navigator and two or three of the merchants were admitted of our party; the former was an exceedingly intelligent man, more learned in the Vedas and the observances of Vishnu than he was in the art of navigation. He had two instruments, one an astrolabe, resembling that in general use in Europe before the introduction of Hadley's quadrant, and one of the latter-named instruments, the use of which he preferred. I did not trouble myself much

about the course or progress of the vessel when at sea and with a fair breeze; but when it fell calm some days afterwards, I felt convinced, from the appearance of the water, that we were within the influence of a strong current. I took the liberty of examining this instrument, and was not greatly surprised to perceive that it had an error of forty-five minutes of a degree. I pointed it out to the Hindoo, who merely observed, "that it would be as well to rectify the error," not considering such a trifle as of any moment.

The declination by which they compute their latitude is printed for them in the Indian character, at Calcutta; but so little care is taken in doing so, that these ignorant men make the calculations of one year answer for those of every other year. It would be conducive to the saving both of property and life, if all men who commanded vessels above a certain size, whether European or Native, should, previous to their taking command, be compelled to pass an examination before the Marine Board, or the Master Attendant of the different ports.

The compasses used in these vessels are of extremely rude construction. They are mostly manufactured in India, and the Arabs have a singular practice of placing the needle on the card, so as to allow for the variation at any

given point; but the same card is used where there is no variation at all, or where its character may be of a nature opposite to that for which the card is set.

Various writers have considered that the Arabian navigators possess some claims to the first application, if not invention, of the compass; if such is the case they have made but small improvement on the original instrument. I found the Hindoo exceedingly willing to receive any instruction which I had it in my power to give him. He had tolerable notions of English arithmetic, and with little trouble I taught him to observe and calculate the stars. I was much amused on such occasions to observe the Arab's astonishment when I mentioned the name of Aldebaran and some other stars, which in our catalogue have retained their Arabian names.

A considerable portion of the time of the crew was passed in playing at a rude kind of chess in the same manner as is practised in India; and although gambling of all kinds is prohibited by their Koran, yet this, as well as cards, were indulged in. Story-telling was a source of never-failing delight. They would sit up sipping coffee, smoking their boory, and listening to these tales, and would remain night after night assembled in the poop long after midnight. Songs and dancing occasionally entered into

their amusements. The former never exhibited either mirth or humour, but were usually low monotonous chants, or in a whining falsetto key. Some of their airs were nevertheless exceedingly simple and pleasing; and we had a Persian on board, whose performance would not have been deemed contemptible in his own country. I believe he had the greater number of the odes of Sadi and of Hafiz by heart, as at least a third of his time was devoted to acquiring them.

I am afraid the Arabs were by no means pleased with that peculiar tone in which Persian poetry is recited in the East, for on several occasions I saw them exhibit most unequivocal symptoms of disgust and ridicule. Their dancing was principally confined to the African slaves, although the Hindus and occasionally the Arabs would join them. A rude instrument, resembling the tambourine, is their only instrument of music. This all accompany with their voice until they become so excited as to appear nearly frantic. On such occasions they will seize and throw each other on the deck with great violence, and I was sometimes seriously apprehensive that they would proceed to absolute quarrel; but whenever this was likely to prove the case, others, not engaged in the

sport, interfered, although it was not unfrequently without violent personal restraint that they could be prevented from again engaging in them. Such are the sports of this simple people; with such they strove to while away the monotony of the voyage. The absence of spirituous liquors forms no inconsiderable item in the contrast between an European and an Asiatic vessel. Here our only beverage (with the exception of coffee) was water. I seldom cared for wine, and I found my health and spirits improve rather than suffer by a Mahomedan-like abstinence.

CHAPTER II.

Calm—Gales—Slave washed from the deck—The Hindu—Vessel fills—Arrival on the Arabian coast—Interview with the Beni-bu-Ali Bedowins—The first attack of the British on that people—Their defeat—Captain Thompson—Second expedition—Sir Lionel Smith—Reflections.

A FAVOURABLE breeze enabled us to increase, without incident, our distance to five hundred miles from the shores of India. First light winds, and then calms, succeeded. We had been twenty days from land: the water grew short. Our great sail, which before had flapped incessantly against the mast, now rested idly upon it. Not a ripple disturbed the glassy surface of the deep. Our snow-white sail gleamed and flashed upon it as from a mirror. We looked, to use the beautiful image of the poet,

"—— A painted ship upon a painted ocean."

The calm continued. Prayers from all parts of the vessel were incessantly offered up for wind. One person, more impatient than the rest, exclaimed, "Oh, God! rather than this, grant a tempest!" As if to show how vain are

human wishes, and that even one impious voice is not always unheeded, on the morning of the twelfth day of the calm the sun rose fiery and red, and fringed with its crimson hue the dark and frowning masses of clouds, which rolled onwards towards the mountains of Ind, like the waves of time into eternity. The sea rose—a sure sign of an approaching gale. The old vessel began to labour and groan, and our passengers already exhibited symptoms of sickness and terror. The breeze now began to show its effects on the horizon, and gradually approached us in a darkened line, fringed and gleaming with countless crests of dazzling white. The atmosphere was close, but, at the same time, cold and damp. Two sea-fowl alighted on our deck, and, while striving to conceal themselves, evinced no terror at the approach of the crew. The breeze had now reached us, and gradually freshened. About noon, in a hard squall, our large sail burst with the explosion of a cannon, and was torn in fragments from the yard. The vessel, however, which had yielded to the squall until the water reached her deck, was now relieved. She rose, and surged heavily to windward. A yell of fear from the crew mingled with the sharp whistle and roar of the blast which struck us; and,

when this sank into silence, all eyes were turned to the ponderous yard, which, bared of its burthen, was swinging about with fearful violence. We lowered this down, and set a small sail forward, which, however, the increasing breeze soon compelled us to furl. Nothing remained but to scud before the gale. Our crazy sides admitted the water through every seam. Unfortunately, we had no pumps, and all hands were employed with leathern buckets baling. Thus passed the first night.

At daylight, the gale still increasing, a heavy sea washed away our only boat, then towing astern. A slave seized a rope and jumped overboard, with the hope of reaching her, but was unsuccessful, and then dragged on board again in a state of great exhaustion. The rolling and pitching of the vessel was now so exceedingly violent that the crew could no longer stand to their work. One tremendous sea struck us on the counter, washed away the rudder, broached us to, and we lay like a log wallowing in the trough of the sea. A few hours before our bark moved in gladness; but she had been stricken in her pride, and was now a dismantled, helpless hulk—for a moment becalmed as some wave rose high before her, or exposed when borne upon the crest of ano-

the wild waves, a short distance from the vessel, rolled over him for ever. The crew beheld this event in silence: they had tasted of death in anticipation. Too forcibly their looks expressed their thoughts—"In how brief a space will his fate be ours!" Indeed, from this moment all hope died within them. Those employed in baling now quitted their labour, and the whole crew, forty souls, assembled on the quarter-deck. By me nothing more could be done; and I made my way to the poop, where, between the mizen-mast and the sail, I seated myself next to our Hindu pilot.

The waves rose heavily up our sides, and their snowy crests incessantly curled into us. The prow plunged so deeply, making every plank in the vessel quiver with the shock, that I expected each moment would be her last. She rose, however, but every time more heavily than before, and at length became water-logged; but, having neither cargo nor ballast, did not sink beneath us. The Mahomedan crew were lying prostrate on the deck, holding on by the hatches and ring-bolts; and with every roll the solemn cry of "Allah akbar!" arose, now shrieked wildly and shrilly, then in hoarser and deeper cadence. We still laboured most violently; I cast a look around; and as the sun

was about to sink below the horizon, gazed upon a scene painful enough to quail the stoutest heart. That glorious orb, thought I, is now lost to me for ever—how soon are my travels brought to a close!

But how looked my Hindu companion? Anticipating that his absorption into the Deity was now about to take place, he sat quiet and calm, a radiant smile even lighted up his countenance. *I shall never forget that smile.* In my religious feeling at this moment hope was mingled with fear, but in his there was no probabitionary trial awaiting him.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the horrors of this night, reeling, as it were, to and fro over our graves. To those who have never been in a situation of such awful suspense, words can scarcely convey the thoughts which flit before us —home, friends, years of existence crowd into a moment's space. We survived the night, and early in the morning the Hindu's* store of water was discovered, and eagerly drunk. The gale now fast subsided, and towards evening a

* Hindus, when embarking in vessels, at least the stricter portion of them, always carry their water separate from that used by the other part of the crew. In cases which have occurred, either from accident or otherwise, where their supply has failed them, they have been known to prefer death to violating this usage.

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fire was soon lighted, and all were quickly engaged in making or sipping that beverage.

In order to place in its proper light the hospitable and truly noble character of this extraordinary race, I deem it necessary to state in what relation they stood with the nation, to an unworthy individual of which they were now so simply and beautifully exhibiting their kindness and attention. After the destruction of the pirate stations, in 1819, by a land and sea force, under General Sir Lionel Smith and Captain Collier, a force of 1200 men was left at Ras-el-Khaimah, which, on account of sickness and want of water, gradually decreased in number, until a remnant was transferred to the island of Kishm, where their commanding-officer, Captain Thompson,* remained under orders to repel any act indicative of a renewal of their piratical outrages; but he was instructed such operations were to be confined to the sea-coast. A few years before the Beni-bu-Ali Bedowins, who occupied the district of Jailan, had embraced the Wahabee faith, and became in consequence especially obnoxious to the Imam of Muscat, whose dominions for some time past had been threatened by those fanatics. It soon assumed all the character of a religious war;

* Now Colonel Peyronnet Thompson, M.P.

for, speaking afterwards of our unprovoked aggression on them, they observed, "We can remain at peace with the English, as religion requires not that we should war with them; but with the Imam of Muscat, who is fighting with us, according to our faith it is impossible to make peace."

A report about this time arose at Muscat that some of their tribe had been engaged in extensive acts of piracy near El-Akara, on the sea-coast, in the vicinity of which I had now landed. The character of Sayid Sayid stands too high for us to entertain for an instant the idea that he would have lent himself to the fabrication of such a report, but there is obviously reason to believe that his bitter hatred against the tribe rendered him but too willing to give credence to it, since, upon reflection, he must have readily discovered that it was next to a moral impossibility that the Bedowins could be guilty of what was laid to their charge. They occupy themselves in tending their flocks and cultivating their date-trees, and do not engage in maritime pursuits; have no boats, nor any harbour, save one:—that one is Sûr, the inhabitants of which are distantly connected with them by ties of blood, but on whom, numerous as are the vessels constantly sailing from this port, suspicion

should place themselves under the protection of their countrymen, ranged to oppose an enemy their crimes had instigated to hostility; but these conditions were deemed insufficient, and the British force, with an impression, perhaps, that they would intimidate the tribe into others more full and binding, moved onwards. There were 311 men of the British force; in the rear were about 2,000 of the Imam's troops, headed by that prince in person. The former were permitted in this manner to approach within sight of the town, advancing in open columns, when, as they were sweeping round a date-grove, the interior of which was yet further concealed by some mounds of earth surrounding its margin, the tribe rushed forth with loud shouts. Before the troops could be formed, the whole was a mass of inextricable confusion, and in a few minutes seven officers and 249 men were dead or dying on the field. A remnant, including Captain Thompson, amounting to about a fourth of those who went into action, fell back with the Imam's troops to Beni-bu-Hassan. That chief had, during this short but desperate conflict, displayed the most devoted gallantry, and in the act of endeavouring to rescue a wounded European soldier (for no quarter was given) he was shot through the

wrist. So close to him was the man who fired, that some of the powder entered the wound. The Imam stood his ground at this town, until his troops, not relishing the probability of another encounter with those of Beni-bu-Ali, were fast deserting him. When this was mentioned to him, he said very calmly—"Let those who are desirous to do so leave me to my fate;" nor had he, in fact, any idea of retreating further, until he was strongly urged by Captain Thompson to do so, who, with the survivors, after five days' uninterrupted march, in safety reached Muscat. While stating the gallantry of this devoted tribe, it would be unjust to withhold a tribute to the heroism of one of our own countrymen: deprived of their officers, who, with the exception of Captain Thompson, had fallen or *fled*, the sick and a few of the wounded who were in the rear, were escorted thence to a small fort at Beni-bu-Hassan, defended there during the night, and finally escorted to Muscat by Surgeon Fallon.

On the 4th of May 1821, Captain Thompson was arraigned before a General Court-Martial, and found guilty of rashly undertaking the expedition against his instructions: and on a charge "of disgraceful conduct, in ascribing his discomfiture to the misbehaviour of the offi-

cers and men under his command," they find him guilty of unjustly, and without foundation, making such a statement; but acquit him of "disgraceful conduct," on the grounds of its proceeding from erroneous conclusions.*

No little astonishment was manifested in India upon the receipt of intelligence communicating this disaster. The annals of our Indian warfare could not furnish a parallel case; nay, if we look over a history of Indian campaigns, we find the victory gained in most instances by the British against an overwhelming force: while here, our own troops brought into action nearly equalled in number the tribe they were opposed to, besides being aided by the Imam's force.

Our empire in India has been styled one of opinion, and consistent with this doctrine which could not submit to unavenged defeat, it was determined that a second force should be despatched against the Beni-bu-Ali Bedowins. Reluctantly in this case compelled to admit the principle, I cannot but bitterly regret the stern necessity which compelled us to act in accordance with it.

In January, 1821, a force of 2,695 men,†

* Asiatic Journal, vol. xiii. page 85.

† 1,282 European and 1,718 Native troops, with six guns.

under General Sir Lionel Smith, sailed from Bombay, and debarking on the 29th January, at Sûr, they encamped for the convenience of the water about three miles from that village. A few nights after their landing, on the 11th February, the gallant Bedowins, with a boldness of conception and a courage which yields them the highest honour, marched from their groves, and approaching by a march of thirty hours along tracts known to themselves, they arrived at the British encampment. Strange enough it is, but nevertheless the fact, that Sir Lionel Smith had encamped some two or three miles from the body of the army, and had the Bedowins succeeded in their object, which through the treachery or backwardness of the Beni-bu-Hassan tribe they did not, they would have left the army in the awkward predicament of being destitute of both a general and his staff. Collecting their numbers about eleven at night, they rushed forward with their war-cry of "Allah akbar!" (God is great!) drove in the picquet, and before the troops could be collected together they had slain one officer, wounded three others, and killed and wounded about fifty of our force. In some cases they cut the tent-ropes, and as the tent fell

band with so much impetuosity that they broke through part of the line, and even as the battle was going against them, cut their way through other troops on their retreat to their grove. Despising the line of bayonets opposed to them, they threw themselves on the troops, seizing the weapons with their hands to break the ranks, and several, pierced through, continued, nevertheless, to strike at the soldiers with their long swords. In many cases they succeeded, for several of the latter who fell, it was afterwards discovered, were cut down in this manner.

When the vigour of the attack was exhausted, and they began to feel their inability at the moment to cope longer with an enemy well-disciplined, provided with artillery, and thrice their number, they withdrew, but neither with precipitation nor in disorder; and their females, many of whom had mingled in the combat, now came forward, regardless of the shots flying in all directions, and dragged the bodies of their wounded relatives from the field.

All who witnessed this remarkable charge speak in unqualified terms of the reckless bravery of this gallant band; and I question if either ancient or modern warfare furnishes a case where more enthusiastic devotion, more

chivalrous and energetic valour, was displayed than on these burning plains. It will stand, without dimming their lustre, by the side of the noblest deeds of Greece or Rome. The shades of the Sacred Three Hundred would have welcomed with a smile such warriors to their side.

Shortly after their retreat, two females came forth from the fort, bearing a flag of truce, with the offer of its inmates to surrender themselves. The answer from the General was that no other condition than giving up their arms would be entertained, and five minutes were allowed for their determination. Consistent with their notions, a more pointed indignity could not be required of them. The term expired, and the attack recommenced; the artillery had effected two breaches in the walls of the fort, and through them our artillery continued to play on those within.

Several were now perceived escaping from the fort to the grove, and a force despatched in that direction picked off a great many. As the troops advanced nearer to the walls, the cry of the women for quarter caught their ears, and at the same time the General perceived a flag of truce exposed on one of the towers. This, it appears, had been seen by others for some time previous. In the name of humanity, was there

no one who would point out to the General that they were firing on defenceless men ?*

The carnage was now stopped. Of 800 men who had entered the field 500 were slain : nor was the victory gained without a sacrifice on our part of 200 men killed and wounded.

When the surgeons were sent to assist the enemy's wounded, they obstinately refused, in the most complicated fractures, to permit the amputation of their limbs, preferring, they said, to lose their lives. About 200 were taken prisoners ; and it furnished to the mind no ordinary picture of the influence which the Mahomedan religion holds over the minds of its votaries, to observe these lofty-souled men, who in a few brief hours had lost home, station, friends, were prisoners, and uncertain what their fates might next be, as the sun sunk below the horizon, without apparently a look or thought of the mortal strife in which they had so recently been engaged, turn calmly towards its expiring beams, and on their knees, with their right arm

* I learn with pleasure, that notwithstanding the severe strictures of the Court of Directors for his conduct in this expedition, that the military career in India of Sir Lionel Smith, (a son of the celebrated Charlotte Smith), and that a brilliant one, was marked by repeated acts of benevolence and humanity to the Natives, and that he piqued himself with justice on those traits.

folded across their breast, leaning in an attitude of humiliation, repeat with unalterable coolness and solemnity their evening prayers. The females exhibited the same spirit of resignation and fortitude. Not a murmur at their change of condition—not a sigh or tear for those who fell escaped them. Supposing themselves about to be put to death, they frequently inquired when their release would take place.

The fort was now razed to the ground, the date-groves cut down, and the water-courses turned aside. It is true the two latter acts were the work of the Imam's forces, and not our own; but having acted in concert with them, it was our bounden duty to see that he did not turn the victory we had gained for him to any other purpose than is warranted by the usage of civilized nations. It is remarkable that the injunction of Abubeker, the immediate successor to the Prophet, when he sent forth his legions to conquer the world, contain these words, which, it is to be regretted, no one refreshed the General's memory with:—"And if you get the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor women; *destroy no palm-trees*, nor burn any fields of corn: cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill for subsistence."

The troops, with their prisoners, were now marched to the sea-coast. The Sheikh, his gallant brother, Khadem, who had planned and headed the night attack at Sûr, and about 150 of his followers, who, from their character or unwounded condition, it was thought were likely to prove troublesome to the Imam, were shipped for Bombay. Poor Khadem, after suffering much from his wound, died on the passage.

It was generally understood in India, that, with the exception of sending the second expedition, the whole of this unfortunate business met with the most unqualified reprobation of the Court of Directors. Not only did they censure that precipitancy which induced Captain Thompson, in spite of his instructions, on such slender grounds to make his first attack on this people, but they commented with equal severity on the several measures of the second expedition—the insisting on the delivery of their arms—their turning aside the water-courses, and destroying the date-trees—their carrying their prisoners to Bombay—and, above all, the proposal made by the General that they should be returned to the Imam for distribution in small parties away from their own patrimony. In conclusion, they directed, with a liberality

which he had extended towards them, and related to me how, through his means, they had been enabled to rebuild their fort and town, and how their numbers and strength were again increasing to their former standard. I alluded to their relations with the Imam of Muscat, but an expression of deadly hatred immediately spread over their countenance. "But for him," they said, "you had never been brought against us, and ere this the greater portion of Oman would have been ours." I reminded them that such was the will of God. "You speak the words of truth," said they, in a more subdued tone; but an instant afterwards a young man added, "God willing, the foot of the Beni-bu-Ali may yet be on the neck of the Khuwarigites." This is a term of reproach applied to those who hold the Imam's faith. They are called Ibazies by the Persians; a name they derive from their founder, Abdallah Ibn Abad, a Khuwarigi, or revolter from the orthodox faith, and legitimate Kaleph at the time of Meruwan, the last of the Omaides —A.H. 125–131—A.D.765–750.

But the evening was approaching; and after shaking hands with my companions, who accompanied me to the beach, I stepped into the canoe, and once more reached the Shat el Frat.

On the following morning we continued our voyage along the coast. The want of a rudder subjected us to great delays and occasional dangers; on more than one occasion we were obliged to drop our anchor close to the rocks; but they present so steep an escarpment that we might have approached within a yard of them. No vegetation girds the sides of the seaward range of hills, nor those which rise in successive ridges to the height of 1,500 feet beyond them. Singularly tinted, their external strata is broken into various diversified forms; some fragments appear tottering to their fall, while others lie broken into fragments, the whole offering to the mind a remarkable picture of ruin and desolation.

Three days more, May 10th, found us safely anchored in Muscat Cove.

CHAPTER III.

Arrival at Muscat—Description of that remarkable city—The Imam of Muscat—Importance of forming a more close political connexion with him—The Author engages as a Slave Merchant—Quit Muscat, and sail for Gambrun—Description of the entrance to, and Islands within, the Persian Gulf.

SCARCELY had our shattered bark anchored within the cove of Muscat when the merchants crowded on board to make enquiries concerning other vessels which had quitted the coast of India before, or at the same time with ourselves. None had been seen by us, and before we quitted the harbour it became certain that of all who were at sea, twenty-six in number, at the same time as ourselves, that we alone survived the gale.

They take these things very coolly in India; life there is cheap. I doubt if the loss of 1,000 or 1,500 men on this occasion was deemed even of sufficient importance to find its way into a newspaper paragraph.

No part of the world presents a wilder or more romantic aspect than Muscat Cove. It is a small semicircular hollow in a mountain

band which girds the shore; and the practised eye of the mariner, accustomed to these coasts, alone could enable them to distinguish it. The island of Fayal affords perhaps the best mark in approaching it. Dark, frowning masses of rock, destitute of every blade of vegetation, rise up on all sides. On each craggy pinnacle is perched a fort; the sea is pellucid, calm, and clear; a burning sun lights up all with splendour, communicating an almost transparent hue to the light-coloured Saracenic-looking fortresses and houses, and contrasting them in a most remarkable manner with the sombre hue of the surrounding scenery.

Words can scarcely convey an idea of this romantic hollow. Perhaps, on the whole, it is unequalled in any part of the globe. At its inner extremity is situated the town, built on a slightly rising slope; the palace of the Imam, the old Portuguese cathedral, a few lofty minarets, and the residence of the governor, tower above the level roofs of the other buildings; but, with the exception of these, the other habitations are wretched edifices, constructed either with sun-dried bricks, or mere huts reared with the branches of the date-palm —the whole are intersected by narrow lanes, or filthy bazaars,—and a low wall encircles them.

About half a mile beyond the gates there are some cultivated patches, watered by a neighbouring rill, which the courtesy of travellers (I suppose, in contrast to the burning desert around) have designated with the name of gardens, for not a tree or shrub is elsewhere seen.

With all its barrenness and unpromising appearance, such is the advantage of position enjoyed by Muscat, commanding, as it does, the entrance to the Persian Gulf, that its harbours are filled with vessels from all ports of the East, and the busy din of commerce constantly enlivens its streets.

In few parts of the world can the necessaries, nay even the luxuries, of life, be obtained in greater profusion. Fruit, vegetables, meat, and grain, are abundant and cheap.

As the graphic writer of "Scenes and Impressions" observes: "Like the rough and russet coat of the Persian pomegranate, which gives little promise of the rich and crimson pulp within, so Arabia, all-forbidding as she looks, can boast of Yemen and her sparkling springs, of her frankincense and precious gums, her spices and coffee-berries, her luscious dates, and her honey of the rock."

Those who gaze upon "the barren and bare,

unsightly, unadorned," aspect of the sea-coast, could indeed never look for the umbrageous and fertile oasis with which the interior is thickly studded. There wheat, barley, and other kinds of grain yield an abundant harvest. There figs, almonds, plantains, pomegranates, grapes, &c. are produced in such abundance, that with some not a tenth part of that which is produced can be gathered. Bullocks, sheep, and goats, are very numerous and cheap. The former, and occasionally the latter, during a considerable portion of the year, when fodder is scarce, are fed on salt-fish and pounded date-stones. The natives assert, that, so far from this singular food imparting a disagreeable flavour either to the flesh or the milk, it really fattens the animal, and by causing it to drink more frequently, produces the latter in greater abundance than when supplied with other fare. The sheep are small, but their flesh well-tasted. Goats are exceedingly numerous, as are fowls; but I have seen few ducks, geese, or turkeys here, nor, in fact, excepting on the banks of the Euphrates, in any other part of Arabia.

Muscat Cove abounds in fish, of which there is a greater variety and abundance than can perhaps be found in any other part of the

world; at times the surface of the water is kept in a perfect foam from the rush of the larger fish in pursuit of their prey.

Some years ago the Honourable Company's ship Discovery anchored within this cove. I was then a midshipman attached to her, and after furling sails, and those minutiæ consequent to such a change in her condition, which are observed on board vessels of war, I had, with some of my companions, gone down below to our berth, in order to open our little port, and thereby let in the air, of which for some days previous tempestuous weather had deprived us. Scarcely had I done so, when, to our astonishment, in darted an enormous seer-fish. It had probably been pursuing a flying-fish. We had been for some days on short commons, and in the course of an hour were making a hearty meal of the welcome guest, who had, nevertheless, so unceremoniously obtruded himself on us.

Cavalla, king fish, sardines, and, indeed, all those common to the Eastern seas, are met with here, but I saw no sharks. We know very little of the habits of fishes, and what these voracious monsters do feed on would form a subject of curious inquiry. The position of their mouth, which renders it necessary, as is well known,

that they should turn on their backs before they can seize their prey, makes it doubtful if they can seize the smaller fishes. Indeed, after witnessing some hundreds caught, I never knew their stomachs to contain any remains of them; and although bones and other articles have been found within those which have been taken in the vicinity of the ship from which they have obtained them, yet very generally their stomachs were entirely empty, or containing but a small quantity of sea blubber. Under what impulse is it, therefore, that they seize men in the water? Is it that they are instigated by the tempting bait of a white skin, and their apparent helplessness? Fishes appear more attracted by the sense of seeing than that of taste. Witness the case of the shark the jaws of which are now preserved in the United Service Museum, which swallowed some papers thrown overboard from a slave ship, and which, being subsequently caught by the crew of a king's ship, and made to disgorge its prey, led to the seizure of the vessel, and, by the production of the letters in a court of justice, to her condemnation. There may also be seen the left jaw of probably the largest shark ever caught. It measured thirty-seven feet, and appears to be of a description differing from any other which natu-

ralists have furnished us. Its teeth will be found the same as the fossil teeth which are met with at Malta, and are dissimilar to that of any other known species. This monster, without waiting to be attacked, made directly at the boat; her bow was presented to him, which he seized, and left several of his teeth remaining in it. It is asserted that it took more trouble to secure and kill this fish than it would have done to have captured half-a-dozen spermaceti whales.

The commerce of Muscat is of some importance, as it forms the entrepôt between India, Persia, and Arabia. Pearls from the Gulf arrive here in great abundance, and the cloths and spices of India are exchanged for the coffee of Arabia or spices of Persia. It is also the great mart for slaves, the shores on either side of the Persian Gulf being supplied from hence. Boats are constantly arriving with their living cargo from the eastern coast of Africa. The annual importation of property into Muscat exceeds a million, and the duty levied thereon furnishes the Imam with a revenue of nearly 200,000 dollars. In my account of the Beni Ali Bedowins, I have given some description of this prince, who is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable men of the age. No ruler I have ever met with

approaches nearer the *beau-ideal* of an Eastern prince. His liberality, both as regards his toleration and the extension of his protection to those of other creeds, is unbounded, while his high courage and profuse generosity are dwelt on with enthusiasm by all who have the happiness to approach his person. I had not been in Muscat twenty-four hours before intelligence of my arrival, unknown to me, reached him, and conceiving from the mode in which I was living (to use his own words) that I was "an Englishman, and in distress," he sent his ministers the same day to intimate that any money which I required would be furnished from his treasury. I was fortunately not in a situation to require such aid, but it did not lessen my sense of the spirit and munificence of the offer.

It will doubtless dwell in the recollection of our readers that this prince despatched to our late sailor-monarch a magnificent 74-gun ship and some horses of the purest breeds of Arabia. The same liberal and enlightened individual but a short time since despatched an envoy extraordinary with costly presents (to the amount of £50,000) to congratulate her present Majesty on her accession to the throne; and amidst the numerous testimonials received by her on that occasion, there are none, perhaps,

which are more calculated to gratify her feelings and those of the nation at large. That the ruler of a remote province in Arabia should thus promptly hasten to lay his congratulations before her, is in itself sufficiently pleasing, but our interest is heightened when we remember the envoy comes from that "far country" which sent forth Queen Sheba to honour, in the plenitude of his wisdom and his power, the sovereign of Israel; nor is it the less gratifying to learn that his reception was such as was calculated to please the prince his master. Very recently an officer in the Indian navy has been despatched to make the customary returns for these presents, and also to enter into a commercial treaty with him;—but too long we have neglected this prince.

Although the details of Napoleon Buonaparte's intended operations against British India are not wholly known, yet enough has transpired to render it certain that great captain meant to carry his troops, had he been successful at Acre, down the Euphrates, to Bosrah, make that his first permanent station, and *en route* possess himself of Bushire, Bahrain, Muscat, and the other points along the shores of the Persian Gulf. Such would be the most obvious and facile route for a foreign power to approach

India, and the importance, in consequence, of our possessing a strong position in this quarter, as much with a view to defence as also to convey, in a quarter at which she is most vulnerable, a forward movement on Persia, has lately been demonstrated, by the occupation with a British force of the island of Kharak, lying off the port of Bushire.

The dominions of the Imam of Muscat extend to a considerable distance on either side of the Persian Gulf, and all the islands and ports in the lower portion are in his possession. Muscat, his capital, commands the entrance to this inland sea, and, in the hands of an European, might be made impregnable. It is wholly inaccessible, save by one path, so narrow as to admit but one abreast from the land side, while from the sea Gibraltar cannot oppose a more formidable front. If we add to this circumstance the little known fact, that the Imam of Muscat possesses a naval force treble in strength to any we maintain in India, it becomes of some importance to know what are our political relations with this prince, and what the extent and resources of the country over which he rules. On all these points, notwithstanding its proximity to our Indian possessions, we were ignorant. The insalubrity of this country, and the supposed

hostile character of its inhabitants, deterred our travellers from penetrating beyond the sea-coast until 1835, when the Editor of these pages did so, and has recently communicated the result of his visit to the public.

As in other portions of the coast of Arabia, the inhabitants of Muscat are of a mixed race from the contiguous nations, and have in consequence but few characteristics in common. The lower classes (and the remark applies to the African slaves with whom they intermarry) present the most symmetrical forms; some are perfect models for a Hercules. The upper classes are of a more spare make, of an olive complexion, somewhat thin, and rather below than above the middle size. The former wear but a scanty girdle, with a handkerchief, substituted for a turban, bound round their heads; the latter clothe themselves in no other way differing from Turks than in the plainness of the material. A great number of Hindus reside here, who are all engaged in mercantile pursuits, and are permitted the free exercise of their religion.

There is a class of men here concerning whom I have heard some singular tales, in other parts of Arabia, called Looteanas, who appear to resemble our gipsies. I neglected to make inquiries of them on the spot, and only

mention them here in order that some future traveller may supply the omission, for I am not aware that we have in any published work mention made of them, and the subject, for obvious reasons, is one of great interest.

Muscat Cove, in the hands of a skilful engineer, might be made almost impregnable, yet from its local features the heat is so great, and its climate so exceedingly insalubrious, that no European has yet been able to reside there; and even such of the inhabitants as can do so, quit the town for their summer residences at Burka and Sib. I was, however, so invigorated with my new course of diet that I feared but little from climate, and, contrary to the practice of other Europeans, who rarely quit their ships, and never think of sleeping on shore, I took up my quarters in a caravanserai with some Bokhara merchants. These men had taken notice of me, "the unknown," as I was then called, when I first came on board, and had shewn some attention to me afterwards; they were now about to proceed to their own country with a venture of slaves. The world was before me, and as their route would lay through an unknown country, I proposed, and it was agreed, that I should accompany them. I cared little for the beaten tracks of fashionable travels, or those

paths which ladies in Egypt or Syria now undertake, with no more annoyance than they could formerly have accomplished a journey from London to Edinburgh. I sought rather to lift the veil from those portions which nature, coy of her charms, had hidden from the gaze of mere tourists, and to bow, in the unspeakable majesty of her solitude, lowly and alone, to her shrine. Such were, perhaps, but waking and fanciful dreams, but they were in accordance with those feelings which sent me forth a wanderer.

Much as my heart revolted at the idea of trafficking in human flesh, yet, as this was the only condition upon which I could be admitted to join the party, I was compelled to take a share in their venture, determining, however, the instant I had reached some favourable point, to manumit the boy and girl, each about fifteen years of age, which fell to my share. The sensitive European would be shocked at witnessing the unceremonious manner to which these merchants resort to discover the good or evil qualities of these unfortunates; they do not all admit of description; sometimes a stick is flung, and, as the slave runs to pick it up, any imperfection in their gait is discovered; their mouth and teeth are examined with particular attention.

He who wishes to retain a favourable impression of human nature, had better never cross the threshold of a slave-market. At Muscat they are exposed in groups in the open air. The women of Dongola, of Darfur, and the copper beauties of Abyssinia, sell for about 150 dollars each; the negresses from Zanzibar or Central Africa seldom for more than eighty dollars. Yet there was nothing in their countenances which spoke of the bitterness of slavery—that accursed name applied but to too many of Africa's sons—and though, perhaps, there is no portion of human nature so debased that the fetters will not gall, yet the sound was familiar to their ear, and their lot was common to most of the companions they had ever known. After their purchase my friends brought their slaves to the caravanserai; but if it was afterwards ascertained that any of them started in their sleep, snored, or possessed any other fault, even of temper, they were returned. I passed my time very gaily at Muscat, and received much attention and civility from its inhabitants.

In the mean time, the Shat el Frat had been careened; a new mast had been fitted, and other preparations made for again daring the dangers of the sea. About a month after our arrival, the bales we had thrown overboard were

replaced, the venture made up, and on the 10th June we quitted the harbour of Muscat, firing two guns as we passed the entrance, which were, however, received in dignified silence. The following day found us at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. There are few portions of the globe which present higher claims to our attention than those around me. Before us rose the lofty mountains of Gambroon, its summit, even at this season, clad with snow; at its base lies the far-famed island of Ormuz; over against it is Gambrun, scarcely inferior at one time in magnificence; and to the right, for which we are now directing our course, is the river Minaw, near which took place the meeting of Nearchus and Alexander.

The shores on either hand are unwooded and barren, and retain the sandy and dusky hue of the deserts they encircle. With a freshening breeze we rapidly approached the two rocky islets which lie off the promontory of Maceta, so minutely described in the voyage of Nearchus. When the fleet had arrived at this point, Onisicritus wished, on account of its dangers, to avoid the gulf and go along the Arabian coast; what curious discoveries they would have made had they succeeded by this route in reaching Egypt: but Nearchus, on the ground

of its being the intention of Alexander to explore these coasts, successfully opposed him. We must here consider Alexander not as a conqueror, but as one to whom geographers are much indebted. The fleet then proceeded to Minaw (river Aramis), in the district called Harmozia, afterwards Ormus, when, by accident, they heard that Alexander was in the neighbourhood. When Nearchus and the king met, Alexander wept, and swore by the Grecian Jupiter and by the Libyan Ammon that the news gave him more joy than the conquest of Asia. Nearchus continued his voyage, and afterwards brought the vessel safe to Susa.

Through the narrow channel between the two our navigators conducted the Shat el Frat, but they were nearly paying dear for their temerity, for about mid-channel the wind failed us, and we were left at the mercy of the current, which swept us along with the utmost rapidity, frequently within a few yards of the base of the rocks which towered above us. We, however, entered the gulf in safety; the perils of the voyage were considered as passed, and fervent prayers were offered up by all. A miniature boat, fashioned from the shell of a cocoa-nut, with a small sail, and fancifully decorated with ribbons, had previously been prepared, and was

now laden with a few grains of rice, some dried flowers, and launched with loud cheers of "Salamat" into the waves. The same form is observed at the entrance of the Red Sea. It is a custom of great antiquity, and, most probably, a remnant of that universal superstition in which our pagan ancestors, together with the greater part of the world, were once enthralled, originating in a desire to propitiate, by offerings of value, the agency of the evil spirits of the deep. Indeed, my companions told me that the present was addressed to the Evil Spirit.

The sea was smooth; there was just enough wind to swell our canvas, the atmosphere was cool and temperate; a bright blue sky shed its intensity of colouring over the waters of the gulf, while the rosy hues of the setting sun were tinging the numerous islets with which they were studded. On the following morning we anchored to fill up our water at Minaw, and I took advantage of a boat which came alongside to visit the shore: hence I proceeded by its river to Shah Bunder.

The course of the stream is very tortuous; its average width at high tide is about 100 yards, and the general depth about six or seven feet; it can then admit vessels of 20 tons, but at low tide its bed is nearly laid bare, and then has the

apeararance of a foul, muddy creek. About eight miles from the sea, in a direct line, stands the town of Shah Bunder, where there is a custom-house and a few habitations; but the number of inhabitants does not exceed six or seven hundred, and it has consequently little wealth or commercial importance. The mountain torrent, which on our maps is found as a river, takes its rise on a mountain about thirty miles distant abreast of the town; it is about 130 yards in width, and the water is there clear blue and deep; its bed is composed of coarse gravel, with small pebbles of primitive rock brought from the neighbouring mountains. Near the sea the banks exhibit a succession of alluvial deposits; its waters, distributed by rills, irrigate a considerable portion of ground, and enables its inhabitants to rear several kinds of grain and fruit. For the luxury of its light and pure water, many of the better classes from the neighbouring towns in the hot months resort here. The inhabitants bear the character of being civil to strangers, as they most certainly were to me.

Shortly after I arrived on board we again got under weigh. We passed close to the island of Ormuz, on which I had frequently landed. The language of eulogium has been almost ex-

hausted in painting the wealth and luxury of this city. I am inclined to think both have been amazingly overrated. The island is about twelve miles in circumference, and in form nearly circular. From sea-ward the surface appears entirely denuded of soil, and exhibits a great variety of colouring; its singular stratification, which, combined with the conical shape of numerous isolated hills, gives it a highly volcanic aspect. Rock salt also enters largely into the formation of this island; and where the heavy rains, to which this part of the gulf is occasionally subjected, have washed away the soil, its appearance is most remarkable, in some places receiving a reddish tinge from a thin layer of earth strongly impregnated with oxide of iron; in others, the blueness and transparency of ice, or the saline efflorescence, gives it the appearance of snow: a mockery, in such a torrid and burning region, more delusive and striking than the mirage, or false waters of the desert. The fort, constructed by the Portuguese, stands on a projecting point of land separated from the body of the island by a moat. The site is well chosen, and it still remains in a tolerable state of repair. Within, the Imam retains a garrison, which, with a few left to collect the salt, amounting to about three

hundred men, are the only inhabitants on the island. A few yards from the fort a building is still erect, which seems to have formerly served either as a minaret or light-house, most probably the latter, but mounds of ruins now cover the sites of former dwellings.

The kingdom of Hormuz or Hormuzeia, situated on the adjacent main, gave its name to this island, which, according to some authors, was previously called Jérun. It is impossible to ascertain at what period it was first occupied; but there are various authorities to prove that it has often served the inhabitants from the main as a retreat, when suffering either from civil commotions or foreign invasion. The advantages of its harbour, joined to its insular position, converted it from a barren rock, to which Nature has denied even water, into the emporium of the East.

I have noticed the few remains that are left to denote the former opulence of Ormuz. The wretched habitations of its present occupants, and the dreary and barren aspect of the surrounding hills, destitute of vegetation, would not lead us to recognize this spot to be a fitting site for the city, which contained four thousand houses and forty thousand inhabitants, whither merchants from every quarter of the globe

resorted, outvying each other in the display of wealth and luxury.

But these now have all passed away; "its very great company" is heard no more, and from its "covering of precious stones" Ormuz has returned to its former barren solitude. This island was the last spot in the sea which served as a retreat to the Guebres, or Fire-worshippers, and all will recollect it was in this neighbourhood that Moore has laid the scene of his beautiful poem. With the least imaginative it would be next to impossible to gaze on a spot, otherwise so interesting to the warrior and historian, and not feel some portion of that glowing enthusiasm with which the bard has invested it.

From Ormuz the Guebres proceeded to India, where, under the denomination of Parsees, they are an industrious thrifty race, who have long quitted their former habits of strife for more peaceable pursuits. A remnant also still remains in Yezd, and in some other parts of Persia.

As the Shat el Frat belonged to the port of Kishm, we proceeded there, with a view of arranging respecting the cargo we had thrown overboard during our voyage. While the other

merchants were thus busily employed on shore, I remained on board to take charge of the slaves; and a most troublesome task it was. "No iron had entered into their souls." When occasion called for mirth they could sing, dance, and amuse themselves with the various sports of their native country; but the female portion were eternally chattering, screaming, and fighting. The only means I had of maintaining order was by stopping their provisions, with the issuing of which I had also been entrusted. The boat we had lost on our passage had never been replaced, and the only way we could reach the shore was by swimming there—a feat which I, at the head of my slaves, under an impression it was conducive to their health, was daily in the habit of performing.

The town of Kishm is situated near the sea, at the eastern point of an island of the same name. A wall, flanked by turrets, surrounds it, and affords the inhabitants security from robbers or pirates. It has the appearance of having at some earlier period been of more commercial importance than at present. There are about two thousand inhabitants, who engage as sailors; and, as it is often visited by

native vessels, which touch there for wood and water, or to obtain pilots for the Kishm channel, it wears a bustling appearance.

Very good wine, and every description of dried fruit, can be obtained, as well as silk and cotton cloths, together with very fine carpets, soft as silk, and of the richest patterns and dye. These latter we purchased at the rate of twenty dollars each; they were six or seven feet long by three feet broad. In 1821 the British force was encamped near the town, and the demand for these several articles was in consequence considerably increased, yet the supply was in general fully equal to it.

Low, sandy, and barren, "Kishm's fair isle" has none of the beauties with which the imagination of the poet has invested it. Grapes (the vine not unfrequently reared in wells), melons, and some few vegetables are its only supplies. The ancients placed the tomb of a fabled monarch, Erythreas, from whom the sea received its classic name, on Kishm, and some sage modern antiquaries, I observe, have there occupied themselves in seeking for it.

Of the islands which, besides Ormuz, form the group situated in this part of the Gulf of Persia, that of Kishm is the largest, and, indeed, surpasses in size all the islands within this inland sea. Kishm stretches along the

Persian shore, from which it is separated by a channel thirteen miles in (maximum) width, but contracting in the middle of its length to three. The channel is studded with islets, and bears in the new charts the designation of Clarence's Straits.

In its form Kishm bears a striking resemblance to a fish; the town of the same name being situate at its head, which faces the eastward; Luft and the island of Anjar to the northward and southward of either fin, and Basidoh to the westward at the extremity of its tail. Its length is fifty-four miles, and width, at the broadest part, twenty miles. On the southern side a ridge of hills extends from one extremity to the other, while the remaining space to the northward is occupied by arid plains and deep ravines. The greater part of the surface of the island is sterile, and in some places encrusted with a saline efflorescence; but the most striking feature in this structure is some singular shaped table hills, which occupy isolated positions in the plains. These are of a circular form, principally composed of sandstone, and are broader at the upper part than at the base. Their average height is from 200 to 400 feet; their surface and sides, worn into hollows by the weather, gives them the appearance of having been subjected to the

action of a powerful stream, an illusion still further increased by observing the plains and the sides of the hills, which, in the form of banks, bound what seem to be the beds of deserted water-courses. In a country where earthquakes are frequent, we might infer, from the general appearance of the whole, that these isolated masses denote the original level of the island, and that the plains have sunk in every direction around them.

At Basidoh, in March 1829, for six hours during the night, successive shocks were felt. The inhabitants were in great alarm, and even the cattle evinced symptoms of fear; nothing serious, however, occurred.

The northern part of the island is the most fertile, and on this account the most populous. The soil consists of a black loam, and on it is reared wheat, barley, vegetables, melons, grapes, &c.; dates are produced in large quantities; cattle and poultry are also reared; but unless their crops fail them the inhabitants are indifferent about disposing of the former. The whole number of inhabitants on this island may amount to about 5,000. They employ themselves in fishing, in cultivating the soil, and in making cloth. They reside in villages and hamlets scattered along the sea-coast.

The only towns in the island are Kishm (the largest); Luft, next in importance; and Basidoh. During the expedition against the pirates in 1809, Luft was attacked by a British force, and property to the amount of sixty thousand pounds taken from its possessors and restored to the Imam of Muscat, from whom they had but a short time before taken it. The first attempt to take this place by storm failed most signally, and we lost a great number of men; the second was carried without opposition, the enemy evacuating the place.

Sandstone appears the predominant rock on the island. On many of the arid plains in the centre of Kishm are found fragments of mica, varying in size from three or four inches to even a foot square.

Salt is found on the southern side, rising up into hills or forming hollows. In the centre of one of these caverns, about fifty yards in length and twelve in height, flows a stream of water; and from the sides and roof hang stalactites of salt, which are sometimes eighteen or twenty inches in length. The surrounding plains are covered with a saline crust which the natives collect and convey to Dustágan. Towards the centre of the island there is an isolated rock, about 300 feet in height, which is steep

on every side, and seems formerly to have served the purpose of a retreat to some bands of pirates or robbers. The summit can only be gained by climbing up through a narrow aperture, resembling a chimney. Some of our officers who ascended by this way, found at the top the ruins of several houses and two tanks. Our occupation of this island has given rise to some discussions; in the present posture of affairs it is not impossible they will be renewed. Formerly Kishm, with Bunder Abbas, was included in the Persian dominions, and they are now held upon payment of a stipulated rent or tribute to that power: but this appears rather a matter of courtesy than of right; for all these dominions were wrested from the Persians by the Beni-i-Manni, and reconquered from them again by the ancestors of the Imam of Muscat. The present King of Persia, therefore, has no more claim upon Kishm than he has to Egypt or Syria, countries which the monarchs of Persia conquered but could not retain. Yet in 1811, a mission, under Mr. Jukes, was despatched by the Bombay Government to negociate this knotty point. The Persians, it appears, had taken umbrage at a British force being maintained here, with a view, as has already been explained, of acting against the pirates.

CHAPTER IV.

Description of Gambrun, ancient and modern—Sickness of the Slaves—Quit Gambrun, and proceed towards the Interior—Hot Wells—Attempt at Assassination—Caravan plundered by a Persian Khan—Return to the Sea-coast.

THE Orientals do nothing in a hurry, and their bargains are often tediously prolonged; thus the arrangements respecting our cargo were not all completed until a month had elapsed; we then proceeded to Gambrun, where with our slaves we debarked, and the Shat el Frat continued her voyage to Basrah. Time attaches us to most things, and I did not see (little cause as I had to like her) the vessel in which I had passed so many weeks again unfold her white sail to the breeze and quit the harbour without a feeling of regret. We hired a house in the town, but, like the others, it was a miserable tenement, more than half fallen to decay; the accommodation afforded for such a number was wretched, and, to avoid the crowd and heat, I took up my quarters on the roof, where some cadjans and a tattered awning served, in

some degree, to protect me from the scorching rays of the sun.

Gambrun, or, as it is now styled, Bunder Abbas, appears to have been a town of little importance until 1622, when Shah Abbas, assisted by the English, drove the Portuguese from the island of Ormuz, and transferred its commerce to this port. Here, instead of being carried in ships to Basrah and the northern ports of the gulf, a very considerable portion of the imports from India and Africa were landed, and transported, by means of caravans, to the interior parts of Persia and the adjacent countries; so that Gambrun became for a time the seaport of Persia.

The English, Dutch, and French had factories here; merchants from all parts resorted to it, and it seemed destined to attain the former opulence and splendour of Ormuz; but its commercial splendour was far more brief. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, the internal commotions and distracted state of Persia frequently interrupted the route for very long periods, and the current of trade became diverted to the northern ports. It should still, however, be remembered that this route conducts, by one of the natural passes, into the heart of Persia; for when Bushire, a few years

ago, remained for some time in a disturbed state, commerce found its way again into this channel, and if that town had not been speedily restored to peace, Bunder Abbas would very soon have recovered a considerable portion of its former importance. Even at present the trade is not inconsiderable, and it is said to be still increasing. In 1827 the Imam of Muscat, to whom the port belongs, collected a revenue of from 8,000 to 10,000 dollars.

Persian carpets, tobacco, and dried fruits form its exports; and piece goods, Indian cloths, and china-ware constitute its principal imports. The annual importation of these articles at the same time was estimated at nearly three lacs of rupees—£30,000.

The town is situated on a slope, which approaches close to the sea; the houses are few, and wretchedly constructed, and the people are mostly lodged in huts. They are a mixed population, composed of Persians, Arabs, Kurds, a few Armenians and Bedowins; their number, constantly fluctuating, may be estimated at from 4,000 to 5,000. Some portions of the English factory-house are still standing, but that erected by the Dutch is in better repair, and still serves his Highness the Imam of Muscat as a residence during his visits to the port.

Just without the town there are some tanks, which were excavated with extraordinary labour by the Portuguese; the length of the most extensive cannot be less than half-a-mile. These are intersected at right angles towards the extremity by two others, so that they assume the shape of a cross.

The inhabitants preserve a few curious tales relative to the former European residents. Very generally they have reference to the mighty bowls of punch in which they indulged, or the enormous sums of money they lavished in items of luxury for their table. Some *surdaubs*,* the ruins of their church, and a few mouldering tombs without inscriptions, are all which remain to denote their brief sojourn. The latter, situated just without the town, are twelve in number, and are either domes or pyramids supported on columns; but the now bigotted inhabitants of Gambrun have not permitted even the bones of those they covered to rest in peace; every grave has been uptorn and spoiled of its charge. One was occupied at the period of my visit by a wolf, which had been slain while in the act of carrying off a sheep. As I stood on this lone and almost unpeopled shore, and gazed on these frail memorials of the departed, a sad picture was re-

* Cellars or vaults, to which the inhabitants, as at modern Bagdad, resorted in very hot weather.

called of the instability of human greatness. But some brief years, and the activity and energy of a few bold adventurers had enlivened it with the busy din of commerce, and enriched the city with the wealth of Ind; all now has fled with them, and here, on the site of their former power, the last remains of their mortality are denied a lodgment.

The weather became intensely hot, and as I ate, drank, and clothed in the same manner as my companions, my garments were gradually laid aside, until I had but a single cloth round my waist, and another thrown over my shoulders. Continually exposed to the sun, my skin had also become of the same copper-coloured hue as that of my companions, and my European friends—could I have been in the way of meeting any—would have found some difficulty in recognising me. In the summer months the climate on this coast is especially insalubrious. Here Pietro della Valle lost his amiable and accomplished wife; the description of which event he tells with a touching simplicity, which goes at once to the heart. The country was in a very unsettled state, and we were delayed for some weeks, awaiting the arrival of mules, which were daily and hourly expected, until at length sickness attacked the party. Two of my companions died of fever, with a sudden-

ness that startled and surprised us. The slaves were then attacked; one by one they died, until half their number was swept off. With these, however, it was not so much disease as that sinking of the frame which constitutes what in Europe is styled "maladie du pays."

From the first attack they refused all food, and gradually wasted away until death released them. Before sickness had thinned their numbers fifty of these poor wretches had crowded into a single apartment. To more than one sense, therefore, was the scene loathsome and offensive. No couch or pallet received their emaciated forms. He or she was happy who possessed a tattered mat, on which to recline. Their masters, as much from natural kind-heartedness as regard to their own interest, were unceasing in their attentions to them, but medicines we had none, and all we could do to alleviate their sufferings was to supply them with water, for which they incessantly raved, or to fan away the swarms of flies and other tormenting insects which filled the air. As soon as death released the poor sufferer, the corpse was wrapped in the blue garment which covered it during life; a bier was borrowed from a neighbouring mosque, on which it was borne without the walls of the

town. There a shallow grave in the burning sand received it. No prayers were said: a single word from his companions in their own language, indicative of "farewell," was the only obsequy over the last remains of the poor African. My heart bled when I considered that I had acted a part in this fearful tragedy.

These slaves had not the thick lip and uncouth form of their countrymen in general; they were a fairer, and even a beauteous race, such as may be seen sculptured amidst the fallen ruins of mighty Thebes. I have already noticed that a girl had fallen to my share. Her name was Zeena. I had purchased her for her great beauty, but soon found that she was also active, lively, and intelligent. At first our only means of conversing was by signs, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure whenever she succeeded in comprehending my meaning. After the task of preparing our evening meal had been concluded I frequently called her to my side, and endeavoured to acquire her language, which was of a silvery sweetness, every word terminating in a vowel. Of this I soon formed a copious vocabulary, and became a tolerable proficient. Sometimes she sang the wild and plaintive airs of her country; and when I had explained to her that this also was not my native land, she would point to Afric's

shore, and her eyes would fill with moisture when she signed to me that there she too had sisters, brothers, and other dear relatives. No one was more attentive to her drooping companions than was Zeena. Of gentle blood, and, evidently, from her small and femininely-made hand, unused to toil, her time was now almost incessantly occupied in tending the sick; she flitted around them as a ministering angel; her companions almost adored her. None but the stoutest were left.

Sixty mules, the cause of all our delay, were at length collected, and with light hearts we quitted Gambrun and its pestilential climate. Debarred, as I was, by the excessive heat from taking any exercise, and constantly harassed by the condition of our household, it was astonishing that I too did not fall sick. I attribute my escape partly to a natural buoyancy of spirit, which no misfortunes could for any length of time sink to despondency, and partly to the resources I had in acquiring by study and conversation the Arabian and African languages.

For two hours our route lay over a sandy waste, sprinkled with a few acacias, and we then entered on a gently-sloping plain. Soil there was none; and the fragments of rock which were strewed around bore the appearance of desolate ruins. In some lone spot,

where moisture had lingered longer than in others, a solitary tree would shew itself, but its foliage so parched and dusty that it differed but little in hue from that of the desert by which it was surrounded. The view in the distance was bounded by mountains enveloped in a purple haze, and towering to a vast height, rising "Alp upon Alp" into all the fanciful forms and positions into which these earth-born giants here cast themselves. A few date-groves occasionally peeped forth on either hand, but their foliage in such a waste has a melancholy, rather than pleasing appearance. Towards sunset we halted near some wells of brackish water. Our slaves had been placed in litters; and upon removing them from the mules it was ascertained that one had died on the journey without any person being aware of it. When the discovery was made the muleteer appeared in no ways pleased that he had been for some miles driving a dead body before him. The Mahomedans, like the Jews, have an objection to touching, or even approaching, a dead body.

The night was lovely; the moon hung imminent, and shed its flood of silver light over the precipices before us. Our guides cautioned the party to leave nothing beyond the circle in which our mules were ranged, because wolves from the mountains were constantly prowling over the ground.

This advice was not thrown away upon an old man, who had but a single fowl, which he had carried in his arms during the day. Before he went to sleep he fastened the string which bound its legs to his arm, and in the middle of the night we were alarmed by the report of a musket. We found a wolf limping off—pursued, and killed him. The old man, awakened by the tug at the cord, had fired at, and hit the animal in the shoulder. We slept through the night without further disturbance, and at daylight resumed our journey, still directing our steps to the base of the mountains.

Our route continued over a vast plain, consisting of either gravel washed down from the mountains, or a hard, indurated clay; and the whole wore the same brown or dazzling light aspect as yesterday. Fragments of mica were strewn around, and the sun's rays, occasionally striking on their flat surface, glittered with almost indescribable brightness. Occasionally a mass of black rock protruded itself, distorted by refraction into a thousand wild and varying shapes. In such a country it is at all times difficult for the eye to estimate distances with any correctness, and it adds not a little to the irksomeness of desert travelling to find, after wending your toilsome way for hours under a

burning sun, the object, instead of appearing closer, absolutely seems to have moved yet more distant from you; but it is still more tantalising when the effects of mirage are added. Various are the delusions this occasions. A hill, furrowed by rains, will assume the appearance of a magnificent city, with minarets, arches, spires, and domes; bushes are mistaken for lofty trees; and sheep and goats for a troop of cavalry, or a train of camels; all looks as seen through a haze, and a waving and tremulous motion is communicated to every object.

Halting for about three hours in the middle of the day, we arrived about sunset at some hot-springs, in the vicinity of which a small, and (for Persia) a neat village rears itself. The slaves with their masters encamped near the margin of the well, as it was determined to halt for two days, and try what effect the waters would have in restoring their healths; but I procured, by the offer of a dollar, a very comfortable apartment, eight feet by seven, in which I remained during our stay. My host was a native of the hills, tall, athletic, with blue eyes, a fair complexion, and with features strikingly resembling those of a Tartar.

The houses here are well constructed, with loose fragments of rock cemented with mud;

some are neatly fitted up; the roofs are flat; and in those windows where talc is not substituted for glass, the air and light are admitted through apertures partially filled with curious devices formed of a firm cement. A small open shed, serving for their cattle and for various domestic purposes, is sometimes enclosed by a wall, but more generally a fence, constructed with the dried branches of the date-palm: with the same material the lower classes construct their huts, which are afterwards covered over with a layer of mud. We found the inhabitants very civil and attentive; and with fowls, a few vegetables, and an abundant supply of water-melons, we fared most sumptuously.

Those who have never suffered from the burning heat of these, or similar regions, can scarcely conceive what a luxury the latter fruit is. They attain a large size, and sometimes hold nearly a quart of juice. They are eaten at all hours of the day, without interfering with the usual meals, or palling the appetite.

I found my host possessed some greyhounds; and, accompanied by him, on the following morning we started over the plains to look for antelopes, and before we returned succeeded in picking up two; one was very young, and we found the dogs standing over, but unable

from fatigue to harm it. I have also known this occur on several occasions at Kishm. Although their flesh is much esteemed in the cold weather, yet now it was lean and tasteless.

A case occurred during our stay here which shews how cheap human life is held in this country. A man who had some trifling disagreement with his wife, seized a knife and stabbed her to the heart. To avoid the first burst of the vengeance of her relations he fled to the mountains, but the matter was arranged before our return by the payment of ten dollars (£4) to them, and the monster went about everywhere, and was received precisely as if nothing had happened.

Our slaves continued to improve in health, and on the morning of the 12th June we continued our journey. The pathway led along a wild, steep, and rugged glen; now winding amidst the huge boulders which obstruct its bed, or then skirting the precipice which sank to a great depth below us; towards evening, after ascending about 3,000 feet, we halted beneath a huge impending rock. How delightful was the change from the chamber of sickness and death, and the overheated sultriness of the atmosphere below, to the freshness of the mountain air in these regions.

We purchased two sheep from some peasants who were passing, which we killed and distributed amongst the party. I always took my meals with the merchants, who, in every way, treated me as one of their own faith. In this I must except an old Persian Moolah, who viewed me with a degree of hatred the more intense, that respect for the opinion of his companions obliged him very often to conceal it. Our first quarrel originated in my refusing to part with Zeena, whom he wished to purchase, and on his threatening me with his vengeance, I had exhibited an *hauteur* or indifference, both upon that and some other occasions in which we were brought into collision, which perfectly maddened him. Once he drew his sword, but in an instant my pistol was pointed at his head. That he meant to poison or murder me in some way, I always felt convinced. He was the very personification of an opium-eating fanatic: his lank locks usually hung down over his eyes, which were of an unnatural brightness, his cheeks were hollow, and a smile of scorn constantly curled on his lip. From the first moment he had honoured me with his hatred I had kept an eye on his motions, and when I saw him this evening shrink away from the party, seat himself upon a projecting mass of rock, and bend

his fiendish gaze on me, I was seized with an inward conviction that he was plotting some deed of evil; and, without letting him perceive that I noticed him, I could discover him removing from his girdle some powders, of which he selected one, and again put the others carefully by. He then approached the place where I was sitting, with a bowl of milk by my side. Affecting to stretch forth his hand for the water-pipe, he partially concealed the bowl with his clothes, while he scattered the powder within it. I had now a fair right to retaliate on my foe, and my conscience would not afterwards have smote me had I slain him on the spot, but I was so situated with the others that I could not, without the probable sacrifice of my own life, do so. I therefore turned suddenly round, seized him by the throat, and called the assistance of others. I stated the case, and the fact of his having poisoned the bowl was clearly established, but nothing followed; those who were friendly disposed, gave good advice to avoid him; others, where human life is held so cheap as in Persia, deemed attempting that of an unbeliever as too much of a bagatelle to occupy the attention more than for the moment. As for the culprit, he laughed at my threats of vengeance, which, in truth, I had no oppor-

tunity, nor perhaps disposition, when my anger cooled, to carry into effect.

Our journey on the following morning continued over the same mountainous tract as yesterday. We continued to pass a succession of villages, some picturesquely situated either on the brow of a hill or within some sloping dell: the green and verdant tint of the cultivated ground which encircles them, contrasts in a singular manner with the sombre hue of the surrounding scenery.

These are watered by numerous rills, which gush clear and sparkling from the rock. A few orange, apple and pear trees are carefully tended; above all soars the date-palm, its lofty figure bending gracefully to the breeze, which now swept in fitful gusts over the mountains. The day was dark and cloudy, and we had even an occasional shower of rain. It would be impossible to conceive wilder or more romantic forms than those assumed by the mountain district we are traversing; huge masses rear themselves, piled in strata upon each other, on either hand, from the peaks and sides of which large fragments have been dissevered, and now lie scattered in the most chaotic confusion. In the ravines and vallies no soil covers these rocks,

and their internal formation is frequently clearly exposed by some huge cleft which has rent the mountain in twain; gigantic ledges stretching along in continuous lines only broken by the torrent, existed as far as the eye can reach; It was astonishing to see with how much care and quickness our mules threaded their path over these tremendous passes; no care was requisite in driving them, they directed their own course, and only halted when the steepness of the road required them to gather breath.

The inhabitants we fell in with were exceedingly hospitable; milk, fruit and dates were brought to us whenever we halted. Our slaves had now sufficiently recovered to walk, there were but eighteen survivors out of forty. We remained for the night at a small hamlet near the brow of the mountain; descending this on the following morning, and continuing our journey until noon, we arrived at a small village.

Reports, upon which, however, we placed little reliance, had previously been brought to us that the country between the sea-coast and that of Kerman, to which we were directing our steps, was in a very disturbed state, and this party were soon doomed to experience the truth, for we now learned that the village was

in the possession of an armed force headed by Hassan Ali Khan, a rebel chief who had lately revolted from the Prince of Kerman.

Hardly, however, had we entered the skirts of the village, when a party approached, and bidding us, in a tone there was no disputing, to dismount, they conducted the whole party into the presence of the Khan. We found him seated at the extremity of a long room in the Sheikh's house; a line of attendants were ranged on either side; and at the door were a crowd of irregular soldiery. The Khan was a handsome man, with a dark flowing beard, richly dressed in a robe of green and gold; on his turban was an aigrette of pearls, and some rich diamonds sparkled from the gold haft of the dagger he wore in his girdle; a Cashmere shawl was bound round his waist. Osman Aga, the leader of our caravan, had been selected to fill the office of spokesman. Advancing timidly up the room, he knelt down before and kissed the hem of the Khan's robe. That worthy, who had been occupying himself twirling a stick, while a secretary was reading a letter, cast a casual glance at the suppliant, and then, as if surprised at his presence, he exclaimed in a voice that made Osman start as if he had been shot, — "Robber! how darest thou traverse the country without my leave?" He made

a sign with his finger: two Ferashes started forth, tripped up his heels, and in an instant poor Osman was borne from the room. The Khan did not deign to notice the remainder of the party, but his attendants thrust us from him, and closed the door. We were now in the hands of the soldiery, who commenced their work of plunder. With all they were more successful than with myself, for I, before quitting Muscat, anticipating some evil of this kind, had sewn the few gold sequins I possessed, and did not require for immediate use, in the sides of my boots, where they fortunately escaped notice. Disappointed in their search, one of them, with a good-humoured laugh, which made me forgive the fellow, transferred my handsome Turkish cap to his own bare scull, giving me in exchange a greasy one of his own.

We were now left to the derision and hootings of the mob, who were not slow in discovering, from our wearing no beards, that we were *nudjice*, or unclean. In this classification I am sorry to say I was included. Followed by the crowd, we directed our steps to the spot where we expected to find our encampment, but all had disappeared, as if by magic. My companions, frantic at the loss, tore their hair, their clothes, and in the extremity of their grief and

indignation, they rushed back to the Sheikh's house to supplicate with the Khan. But fortunately they were denied admittance; they gradually became more resigned, and finally adopted my advice to retire to a coffee-shop. Coffee and tobacco are admirable sedatives, and, touched at length with our misfortunes, the inhabitants permitted their feelings of compassion to replace those of ridicule, and finally brought us a plentiful supper, consisting of flat cakes of bread and sliced cucumbers floating in butter-milk. The morning confirmed our worst fears; intelligence was brought us that slaves, merchandize, and the whole kafilah had been quietly marched up the country; not the slightest hopes remained of recovering either. To my companions it was a mere pecuniary loss which they had suffered, but I found, thus early in my travels, all my hopes of completing my journey put an end to; but what to me was a far bitterer pang, Zeena had been torn from me at a period when, by her devotion to my will and her sweet and engaging manners, she had greatly attached myself to her. Already had I formed plans for her education and improvement, and thus had they all terminated.

On the following morning the Khan and his ruffian band left the town, bent on the plunder

of distant villages, and Osman Aga, finding himself unguarded, walked out of prison and joined us. A consultation was now held, on which it was agreed that the whole party should return to the sea-coast.

Thus ended my hopes of reaching Bokhara, and my adventures as a slave-merchant.

CHAPTER V.

Arrival at Gambrun — Embark for Ras el Khyma — Excessive heat—Description of the Johasmi Pirates—History of a Pirate Chief—His singular Feats of Intrepidity—His Death—Power of the Sheikhs.

We arrived at Gambrun without further incident than suffering from great fatigue, for we had been compelled to retrace our steps on foot, and the heat of the sun compelled us to travel at night; the greater part of the day being passed in sleeping under some impending rock. The others now determined to proceed by the way of Muscat to Bombay, and endeavour thence to reach their own country. My own views of penetrating towards Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor, had been interrupted for a time by the tempting bait which the outset of this journey had placed before me, but they now returned with redoubled force, and as a *bagalah* at this time anchored within the harbour bound for Bushire, but touching previously at Ras el Khyma and Bahrain, I determined to make the best of my way there. My

baggage did not encumber or embarras me, for I had nothing but the clothes in which I stood; accordingly I went on board, and after a few hard words with the captain, without which a bargain in the East is never concluded, for five dollars I obtained a passage. My dress and exposure had so completely disguised me, that he took me for what I described myself to be, a Bokhara merchant. Ten times the sum would have been demanded had he known I was an Englishman, for my worthy countrymen lavish their money with such profusion that they are held to be wholly ignorant of its value, and their purse supposed to be kept well filled by the power [al kym*] they have of turning whatever they please into gold.

We sailed on the following morning. The last remains of the land wind carried us a few miles from the shore, and there left us becalmed. In June, "Harmozia's sea sleeping in bright tranquillity" sounds more harmonious to the ear than it is in reality to the other senses. Those whose wanderings have been confined to the country in which that exquisitely beautiful poem 'Lalla Rookh' was penned, cannot perhaps even in imagination picture, during the summer months, the fiery heat of these

* Hence our term, *alchymy*.

regions. One fact I may relate will bring it, however, in a palpable state before them. At this season, in 1821, H.M. Frigate Liverpool was proceeding from Muscat to Bushire: the weather gradually increased in warmth, double awnings were spread, the decks kept constantly wetted, and every precaution used to prevent the exposure of her men; yet in one day, from a species of *coup de soleil*, she lost three lieutenants and thirty men. If, for however brief a period, they exposed themselves to the sun, they were struck down senseless; vertigo followed, accompanied by foaming at the mouth. In the greater number of cases sensation never returned. The frigate's main deck at one time is described to have resembled a slaughter-house, so numerous were the bleeding patients. Such was the heat to which I, in a great measure, was exposed.

The *bagalah* had no cabin, and my only protection from the fiery heat of the sun was some tattered fragments of canvas supported against the shrouds by two upright sticks. I however passed the time very tolerably; acquiring the language, smoking the boory, or playing at chess with the captain. I am convinced, however, the spareness of my diet contributed not a little to the health I enjoyed—a few fragments of dried fish, some

rice or dates was my only fare. The dew which falls at night after the parching heat of the day is singularly copious. In the morning the rigging and sail was teeming with moisture, which ran from them as if they had been recently subjected to a smart shower. I slept, of course, in the open air. Bed I had none, but the cloak upon which I lay was often completely saturated. Such exposure, unless in the autumn of the year, is not considered prejudicial to health; and the crews of the vessels of the Indian navy are permitted at all times to sleep on deck.

Our "chaste" and "silver" moon, which inspires lovers and poets in England, would fail in producing such effects in the Persian Gulf. Its glare there is so painful, and communicates feelings so disagreeable, that at night a person may be observed sheltering himself from its rays with the same care as he would in the day from those of the sun. The effect of lunar rays, in producing the speedy decomposition of fish and animal substances has never, as far as I know, been attempted to be explained; the fact, all who have been in the East and West Indies can bear testimony to. We had received some other passengers on board at Gambrun for Ras el Khyma, but they kept out of the way, and I saw but little of them;

it was not until after they left that I learned the cause of their shyness. They were pirates, who, but three days before, had seized a small trading boat which had put into a lone part of the island for water. After plundering her, they fastened the crew (five in number) round the anchor, suspended it from the bows, cut the cable, and let the anchor, with its burthen, sink to the bottom. Intelligence of the outrage was conveyed to the commodore, who traced them to Ras el Khaimah; but the unfortunate sufferers were Persians, between whom and the Arabs marvellous little sympathy exists. Every effort was therefore made to conceal the murderers, and no one in consequence affected to know whither they had fled. It was also impossible to ascertain the port to which they belonged. "Ah! no; impossible such rascals can belong to our tribe," was the answer of all who were taxed with relationship to the offending parties. After being becalmed and drifted about by currents for two days, a breeze sprung up, and we ran before it for Ras el Khaimah, the creek of which we entered shortly before sunset.

Ras el Khaimah, or the Cape of Tents, is built on a low, sandy, projecting point, about three-fourths of a mile in length, its breadth not exceeding 400 yards. A high wall flanked

by several towers extends along the sea-coast. The harbour is formed by this peninsula and the opposite shore, and is about half a mile broad, with a bar at the entrance only admitting vessels at high-water; but here, behind the towers, when any danger threatens them, they haul their vessels up above high-water mark. The houses, as in most Eastern towns, are surrounded by huts, and the hue of both differs but little from the surrounding desert; extensive groves of date-trees fringe the margin of others; in the distance, bending away to westward, runs a range of mountains, elevated from 3,000 to 4,000 feet. This is the termination on the Arab side of the hilly land; beyond, to the northward, it is a low, flat, sandy shore, scarcely a hill intervening until we arrive at the Syrian and Taurus ranges, a distance of 800 miles.

As it was reported we were to remain here two days, and that two, in reality, I knew would most probably be seven, I took up my quarters on the shore, in a hut, for which I paid a trifle. Here I was enabled to make some observations on the extraordinary race of people among whom I found myself. Arabia and the Arabs have always held a conspicuous place in history, but individually, as a province and people, there is no portion of

one or the other which have excited more attention than the Johassem pirates on the shore of the Persian Gulf. From the earliest dawn of history, we have mention made of them, and they have continued to follow such pursuits uninterruptedly for a greater length of time than can be paralleled in any part of the globe. Indeed, neither the country or people have ever changed; and we have still in Arabia the state of society which prevailed in the early states of Greece, when the Mediterranean, from whose wealth-diffusing bosom the current of knowledge and civilization flowed into Europe, was infested with bands of robbers and pirates.

The early efforts of commerce were preceded and blended with such pursuits, and in the time of Homer it was customary to inquire, in the most courteous manner, if the stranger was a merchant, or merely practising as "a sea-attorney." The profession of a pirate was considered to carry with it no disgrace, but, on the contrary, appears to have been held highly honourable. To the Arabs their burning deserts have always proved the cradle of liberty, and notions of independence have ever there unalterably and warmly been cherished. Necessity prompted some to reside on the sea-coast. With such a wild, energetic, and warlike people,

whose chief delight is in the exhibition of personal prowess, contempt of danger and death, the transition from a fisher and a trader to a pirate would soon follow; the joys of the conflict, and the rich spoil won by the bravery of the moment, presented irresistible charms to an imaginative and half-civilized people; nor could the physical features of any country be found better suited to favour such lawless pursuits. Their sea-coasts were indented with numerous creeks, so winding in their direction, that once within the entrance and the vessel was quickly lost sight of; indeed I question if any part of the globe presents a more tortuous or irregular outline than the north-east portion of Arabia. Lurking in these nooks, where the entrance of the gulf is not more than twenty miles in width, they were enabled to rush out and seize on their prey; and until within the last few years they kept the whole eastern seas in a state of alarm. Without discipline, system, or organization, they embarked under the banner of some favourite chief, and in many instances displayed a boldness and reckless gallantry worthy of a better cause. Accustomed on shore to a life of rapine and violence, where all go armed, murders are rife, and the sword of the strongest is the only pro-

tection to life and property, we cannot be greatly surprised at the recklessness of human suffering which they displayed when afloat. Indeed, when we observe what monsters slave-dealing and piracy have transformed those professing *Christianity* into, we cannot expect the character of the Arabs to be improved by similar pursuits; still I must confess, with a people who are not naturally cruel, I am somewhat surprised they should have adopted the savage and revolting principle of sacrificing their captives. They did so with circumstances of horrid solemnity, which gave the deed the appearance of some hellish religious rite. No injunction to such an effect exists, however, in the otherwise fanatical faith they avow. After a ship was taken, she was purified with water, and with perfumes; the crew were then led forward singly, their heads placed on the gunwale, and their throats cut, with the exclamation used in battle of "Allah akbar!"—God is great!

Until some time after the commencement of the present century, the British government had exercised a conciliatory spirit towards these robbers; and emboldened by their success in capturing several merchant-vessels, and also a small vessel of war belonging to the East-India Company, they even ventured to attack

H. M. ship Lion, of fifty guns, and though signally defeated, this act shews what such bold spirits were capable of daring. An expedition in 1809 suppressed them for a time; but as they broke out again, a second in 1819 succeeded in razing their forts, and burning, or otherwise destroying their boats. The first expedition, on the 13th of November, took the town by assault, driving the enemy into the interior, spiking their guns, destroying their vessels, magazines, &c. Considerable plunder was taken, and one fortunate individual, a private, obtained a purse containing fifteen hundred gold mohurs, or nearly twelve hundred pounds.

Since this period their coast has been minutely surveyed, and their haunts consequently laid open. A strict system of surveillance at the same time was established by the maintenance of a naval force in the gulf; and, as a measure of necessity, their attention became turned from piratical to commercial pursuits: their boats trade peaceably from port to port, and though such outrages as I have before narrated between themselves will occur, yet the British are always respected, and a degree of peace and order maintained on these shores, which it is not probable that they during any

other period have known. All their towns and forts have, however, been rebuilt, their boats are more numerous than ever, and, were the present foreign check on them removed, they would very quickly relapse into their pristine habits. In such a country we can never expect to eradicate habits in which they and their ancestors for centuries have gloried. They dwell with particular enthusiasm on the exploits of one individual, whose career and deeds were so extraordinary that I shall offer no apology for giving a brief detail of them. This dreaded man, Ramah ibn Java, the *beau ideal* of his order, the personification of an Arab sea-robber, was a native of El Kalif. He began the world as a dealer in horses, but taking a disgust at an early period to such a mode of life, he resorted to one more congenial to his disposition and nature. Purchasing a boat, he, with a band of about twelve companions, commenced his career as a pirate, and in the course of a few months he had been so successful, that he became the owner of a vessel of three hundred tons, and manned with a lawless band of 350 men. It was a part of his system to leave British vessels unmolested, and he even affected to be on good terms with them. I have heard one of our old officers

describe his appearance when he came with his war-boat into Bushire roads. He was then about forty-five years of age, short in stature, but with a figure compact and square, a constitution vigorous, and the characteristic qualities of his countrymen—frugality, and patience of fatigue. Several scars already seamed his face; and the bone of his arm had been shattered by a matchlock ball when boarding a vessel. It is a remarkable fact that the intermediate bones sloughed away, and the arm, connected only by flesh and muscle, was still, by means of a silver tube affixed around it, capable of exertion.

Ramah ibn Java was born to be the leader of the wild spirits around him. With a sternness of purpose that awed those who were near him into a degree of dread, which totally astonished those who had been accustomed to view the terms of equality in which the Arab chiefs appear with their followers, he exacted the most implicit obedience to his will; and the manner in which he acted towards his son exhibits the length he was disposed to go with those who thwarted, or did not act up to the spirit of his views. The young man, then a mere stripling, had been despatched to attack some boats, but was unsuccessful. "This das-

tard, and son of a dog!" said the enraged father, who had been watching the progress of the affair —" you return unharmed to tell me — fling him over the side." The chief was obeyed, and but for a boat, which by mere chance was passing some miles astern, he would have been drowned. Of his existence the father for many months was wholly unconscious, and how he was reconciled I never heard, but during the interval he was never known to utter his name. No cause, it appears, existed for a repetition of the punishment; for while yet a youth he met the death his father would have most coveted for him; he fell at the head of a party who were bravely storming a fort.

Ramah, although a man of few words with his band, was nevertheless very communicative to our officers whenever he fell in with them. According to his own account, he managed them by never permitting any familiarities, nor communicating his plans, and by an impartial distribution of plunder; but the grand secret he knew full well was in his utter contempt of danger, and that terrible untaught eloquence, at the hour of need, when time is brief, and sentences must be condensed into words, which marked his career. Success crowned all his

exploits; he made war, and levied contributions on those he pleased. Several times he kept Bushire, the sea-port of Persia, in a state of blockade, and his appearance was everywhere feared and dreaded. The treaty of 1819 compelled him for a time to desist from pursuing his vocation; he therefore took possession of a small sandy islet near his native town, where he built a fort, and would occasionally sally forth, and plunder and annoy vessels trading to Bahrain. Although now perfectly blind, and wounded in almost every part of his body, yet such was the dread inspired by the energy of this old chief, that for months no one could be found willing to attack the single vessel which he possessed. The Shiekh's brother, roused at length by the injury he was inflicting on the revenues of the port, and shamed at the disgrace which their forbearance was bringing on them, proceeded in three heavy boats to attack Ramah, who was cruising off the harbour. His followers, too well trained to feel or express alarm save that which arose from affection for their chief, painted in strong terms the overwhelming superiority of the approaching force, and counselled his bearing away from them, but he spurned the idea. The enemy drew near, and closed upon him; after

a severe contest they gained the deck. An instant after — dead and dying — the victor and the vanquished were given to the wind. Ramah, with a spirit in accordance with the tenor of his whole career, finding the day was going against him, was led by a little boy to the magazine, and then, it is supposed, applied the pipe he had been smoking during the action to the powder. Such to his life was the fitting end of the pirate chief!

Having shewn what these people were a few years previous, let me proceed to describe what they now are.

Although debarred by the treaty from fighting afloat, yet their feuds are as frequent as ever on shore. This originates partly in their being prevented, for a considerable time of the year, from any more worthy pursuit. The pearl fishery continues only during the months of June, July, August, and September, and the remainder of their time would otherwise be passed in idleness: "how," said the Sheikh, when I was talking to him on this subject, "can we employ our time on shore better, than by settling such differences as during more busy times have originated between us." After these encounters our surgeon's assistance was very frequently called in, and some of the patients were cut and

gashed in the most terrific manner. They bore the dressing with astonishing firmness, but under no circumstances would they consent to the amputation of the limb.

In their appearance they differ from the other Bedowins, in being somewhat taller, stouter, and fairer; and some of them exhibit a development of flesh and sinew I have never seen surpassed; in truth, perfect Herculean models of strength and symmetry. The features of the Sheikhs and superior classes bear a strong characteristic resemblance to each other; the contour of their face is a lengthened oval, the forehead flat and moderately high, the nose prominent and slightly aquiline, and the chin retreating, so that their profile partakes more of a round than a straight character; their complexion is a light coloured, heathy brown, more deeply tinged about the eyes, neck, and joints; their beards and moustachios are always of a deep black hue, but neither are worn very long; the eye, dark and bright, is unusually deep-seated beneath their brow, and the expression of their countenance in general is rather harsh and gloomy, partaking of their general character, which displays itself in an utter contempt for all frivolous pursuits, and of what are styled the comforts of life.

While in their boats a single cloth around their waist is all which is worn; but they never appear on shore but in their full costume as Bedowins. A shawl, wove with thick cotton and silk, envelopes their head; it is about four feet long and two broad, striped red and yellow, and one end partially shrouds the face, thereby imparting an additional harshness to their stern features. The silk at the extremity of this shawl is twisted into cords, which serve, by their motion, to keep off the flies and other insects, which are here particularly numerous and troublesome. It was seldom that a boat detached from the ship to the shore did not come off laden with them, absolutely, in fact, clustering in masses to her sides. A shirt of unbleached cloth, open in front, but buttoned round the neck, is confined to the waist by another cloth, in which is kept their tobacco and cartouch boxes, together with their knives or daggers, which serve, like the dagger of mercy, not only to finish their victims by cutting their throats, but also for their necessary domestic purposes. Over their shoulder is slung their powder-horn studded with brass, and their matchlock of great length, usually enclosed in a leathern bag. By their side is worn their formidable sword, which is a thin, straight, two-edged blade, with a long

handle without a guard, and attached to it by a leathern thong is a small circular shield, about ten inches in diameter; thus far, costume and arms closely resemble the Highlanders. Their cloaks or camelines, which in the cold weather are worn by all classes, are of several kinds; the best, of a cream colour and fine texture, in value about thirty or forty dollars, are fabricated in Nesjd; but a stouter and inferior description, either black or in alternate stripes of white or brown, is more generally worn, and its value may be estimated at five or six dollars.

The females and children are much fairer than the men: when young the former are pretty, and all have fine eyes and good teeth; but the hard labour to which their husbands consign them, and their meagre fare, brings them prematurely to decay, to which, however, their very early marriage, usually contracted when they are not more than thirteen or fourteen, not a little contributes. Their dress consists simply of a handkerchief bound round their head, and a loose blue shirt completely enveloping their whole person. No kind of education is bestowed on their children; expertness in the use of arms is all in which the parent is anxious to see them excel. A little urchin, five or six years old,

struts about with his wooden sword, and proud and happy is he if, at the age of ten, he can adorn his person with a real Ferrara. They run about wild and nearly naked, amusing themselves principally in the water, whence they become at a very early age half amphibious. One great source of amusement is to fashion out models of native vessels, some of which are very well done, and then watch or follow their progress in the water. Little attention to cleanliness is paid by any class; their children are especially neglected; you frequently meet them in the streets with a darkened circle of flies attached to a sore around either eye. Use has so accustomed them to their stay, that they are permitted to remain unmolested.

Their total abstinence from spirituous and fermented liquors, and their simple diet, render diseases of rare occurrence, and instances of longevity are not at all uncommon. Cholera and the small-pox occasionally visit them; the former they had at first a very singular mode of treating. Immediately the symptoms appeared, the patient was deluged with cold water, which was continued until he died, or the spasms disappeared. They have a peculiar horror of the small-pox; the sufferers are re-

moved without the town, and the same precautions used in approaching them as if they had the plague.

Milk, dates, fish, and cakes of barley-bread form the staple articles of their food, to which a Sheikh may add a pillaw of rice, fowls and kid. All classes partake freely of coffee, which is drank before and after meals. The whole coast abounds in fish; mullet in the back waters and creeks are caught with the casting-net in great numbers. This people prepare their fish in the same manner as Diodorus describes the Babylonians to have done; they first dry it in the sun, beat it very small in a mortar, and afterwards sift it through a fine cloth, form it then into cakes, and bake it with their bread. Poultry, eggs, butter and cheese, together with fruit brought either from the green mountains or the fertile oases of Omân, are cheap and plentiful.

The power of their Sheikhs, from the more turbulent character of those over whom they rule, is of necessity less limited than with the Bedowin Arabs. They maintain a body-guard to enforce their authority, and, in extraordinary cases, exercise a power of life and death. But I must not linger more with this wild and singular people. Every civility was offered me

by those I came in contact with during my stay, and I even left them with some little regret. But the Naguedar having made all his arrangements, reported himself ready for sea, and, on the morning of the 12th June, we sailed for Bahrain.

CHAPTER VI.

Maude's group of Islets—Pearl Fishery—Mode of obtaining the Pearls—Their probable value—Commerce of Bahrain—Advantages of position—Surveying Vessels—Fresh water obtained from beneath the salt.

Our course the first few days lay along that extensive bank which girds the greater portion of the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf; coral reefs, nearly on a level with the water, occasionally rear themselves, but in general the depth varies from five to fifteen fathoms. Here from a very early period has been carried on the most extensive fishery for pearls in the world. Those which are procured are also, I believe, of the very finest quality, the largest, and the most valued. This single article of commerce produces the means of subsistence for nearly the whole population of the Arabian shore of this sea. The pearl oysters are found more or less along the whole of the Arabian coast.

The right of fishing is common to all the gulf, but those who engage most extensively

in the trade are the inhabitants of the pirate coast and the island of Bahrain. Custom has assigned limits to both, boats belonging to the former seldom proceeding beyond, or to the northward of, Halool, while those fitted out by the inhabitants of Bahrain prosecute their labours between that island and the port of Katif. "Such as are fished (says Major Wilson) in the sea near the islands Kharak and Borgo, contain pearls which are said to be of superior colour and description, from being formed of eight layers or folds, whilst others have only five: but the water is too deep to make fishing for them either very profitable or easy there; besides, the entire monopoly of the fishery is in the hands of the Sheik of Bushire, who seems to consider these islands as his immediate property." The Bahrain boats, again, being in its immediate vicinity, return when laden to their own port for the purpose of opening their oysters, while those from the pirates' coast proceed, for a similar purpose, to the several islands with which the lower part of the coast is studded. Not less than three thousand boats are employed during the season, and we had occasion to thread our way through fleets of two or three hundred. All were briskly engaged, as the weather,

calm, sultry, and dense, by keeping the water free from agitation and clear, was particularly favourable.

I again quote from Major Wilson's most interesting paper. "The fishing-season is divided into two portions, the one called the short and cold, the other the long and hot; what is called the short or cold fishery is common everywhere. In the cooler weather of the month of June diving is practised along the coast in shallow water; and it is not until the intensely hot months of July, August, and half of September, that the Bharain banks above mentioned are much frequented. The water on them is deeper (about seven fathoms), and the divers are much inconvenienced when that element is cold; indeed they can do little when it is not as warm as the air, and it frequently becomes even more so in the hottest months of the summer above-mentioned."

The value of the whole pearl fishery in the Persian Gulf may be estimated in round numbers at nearly half a million (sterling) annually. The use of pearls, however, seems somewhat on the decline. By the ancients they appear to have been more valued than by the moderns. I again quote from Colonel Wilson. "I have not admitted in the above estimate much more

than *one-sixth* of the amount some native merchants have stated it to be, as a good deal seemed to be matter of guess or opinion, and it is difficult to get at facts; my own estimate is in some measure formed on the estimated profits of the small boats. But even the sum which I have estimated is an enormous annual value for an article found in other parts of the world as well as here, and which is never used, in its best and most valuable state, as anything else than an ornament. A considerable quantity of the seed pearls is used throughout Asia in the composition of majoons or electuaries, to form which all kinds of precious stones are occasionally mixed, after being pounded, — excepting indeed diamonds, which are considered (from being so hard) as utterly indigestible. The majoon in which there is a large quantity of pearls is much sought for, and valued on account of its supposed stimulating and restorative qualities. But I presume that pearls are nothing more than sulphate of lime; and that Cleopatra's draught was a luxury only in the imagination.

"The Bharain pearl fishing-boats are reckoned to amount to about fifteen hundred; and the trade is in the hands of merchants there, some

of whom possess a considerable capital. They bear hard on the producers, or fishers, and the man who makes most fearful exertions in diving hardly has food to eat. The merchant advances some money to the fisherman at cent. per cent. and a portion of dates, rice, and other necessary articles, all at the supplier's own price; he also lets a boat to them, for which he gets one share of the gross profits of all that is fished; and, finally, he purchases the pearls nearly at his own price, for the unhappy fishermen are generally in his debt, and therefore at his mercy.

"The following may be reckoned the common mode of proceeding:—Five ghowass or 'divers,' and five syebor or 'pullers up,' agree to take a boat together: the capitalist may probably already have lent these ten men about two hundred and fifty crowns to support their families during the former part of the year; perhaps they were unfortunate in the fishery of last year, and gained little.

"It is supposed they may gain in the current year what the capitalist, in his generosity, may value and receive for one thousand German crowns, which is considered fair success, perhaps above the common, for a season. The division would be as follows:—

Total value acquired,—German crowns	1000
Deduct, first, one-eleventh to the capitalist for the boat ..	90
	910
Secondly, 250 crowns, advanced generally in food, &c.	250
	660
Thirdly, 100 per cent. on 250 crowns advanced.....	250
	410
Fourthly, 5 crowns from each fisherman, paid as a tax to the sheik, or chief of the island.....	50
Balance.....	360

to be divided among the ten fishermen, leaving thirty-six German crowns to each.

" If the fishermen be unlucky, or the season be bad, they may not, as is sometimes the case, realize the sum expended, and must then irretrievably get in debt, becoming thereby for ever at the mercy of the rapacious capitalist; others, again, may be fortunate in getting a large draught of valuable pearls, and thus rise into capitalists themselves. Occasionally, the oysters are brought on shore before being opened, and sold as a gambling venture; but they are generally opened at sea, and the pearls taken out. The largest shells are preserved; many are from six to nine inches in diameter, and are valuable on account of the mother-of-pearl with which they are lined. The oyster itself is

never eaten even in a country where food is so scarce.

"It is not always on the spot where the article is produced that it is easiest to be procured, or, when so, to be had cheapest, or of the best quality. In some places engagements of a nature something similar to those mentioned above, are made; and the produce is thus forestalled, generally for a foreign market, before it is actually acquired. Individuals who are not merchants are always made to pay very dearly for the liberty of selecting things of the first quality, as taking them away diminishes the general merchantable estimation of produce; and men who deal in the rough and wholesale will not, without a considerable bribe, thus reduce the value of their goods below the common level. This may account for more being demanded from individuals making selections for fine pearls here than they probably could be bought for in London. Indifferent and bad pearls are abundant and cheap; and they are used in great profusion in embroidering both the dresses of women and men in Persia. A blue velvet upper garment, tastefully embroidered in pearls, has a magnificent appearance. But, respecting the larger and more valuable pearls, what would pass

current among eastern nations as good and suitably arranged, as to shape, size, and water, would be rejected in Europe as intolerably mixed and utterly ill-assorted. There is the same difference in the estimation of flaws and the 'water' in stones and jewels. But, indeed, want of precision, and an indistinctness both in the perception of ideas and their delivery, is more apparent among Asiatics in general than Europeans. Individuals of the eastern and western quarters of the world might all mean to speak the truth, but how differently composed would the description of anything by a Persian, an Arab, or an Indian be, from that of an Englishman!"

When a boat arrives at a spot considered from the nature of the bottom as likely to prove favourable, the boat is anchored, and the crew divided into two portions; one remains in the boat to receive the oysters, and haul up the divers, the others strip naked, and jump into the sea. A small basket, capable of holding from eight to ten oysters, is then handed to them, and suspended to their left arm; the nostrils are then closed with a piece of elastic horn, the diver places his foot on a stone attached to a cord, inhales a long breath, and upon rising his right arm as a signal, the rope

is immediately let go, and he sinks to the bottom. After collecting as many as are within his reach, he jerks the line, and is drawn at once to the surface. Forty seconds is the average, and one minute and thirty-five seconds the ultimatum which they can remain below. They now cling for a few minutes to ropes suspended for that purpose over the sides of the vessel, and renew their exertions until tired, when they exchange places with those in the boat, and so on alternately, until their cargo is completed. Unopened the oysters are valued at two dollars the hundred; say upon an average they bring five to the surface, that would be at the rate of about a penny for each descent. Little enough for such a laborious and unhealthy employment did they obtain the whole, but they are fortunate if, after the rapacious demands of their masters are satisfied, they get a third. No one receives any definite wages, but are paid in certain shares, dependent on their skill as divers, or other causes. Sharks they appear to hold in little dread; but the saw-fish was much feared, and instances were related to me of men who had been completely cut in two by these monsters. To protect themselves from the blubber which floats about in some places, and if it comes in

contact with them stings very severely, they envelope themselves in white dresses, and have when floating about in the water, with the sun glistening on them, a singular appearance.

There are several modes of opening the shell, but most commonly it is done with a clasp-knife, and the pearl is found embedded in the muscular portion of the fish, where it is attached to the shell. The shells are also sometimes piled up on shore, where the heat of the sun decomposes the fish, and the pearls are at once obtained.

The sheikhs levy a tax from three to five dollars on each boat, according to its size. The value of the whole produce of the season on the principal bank is estimated at forty lacs of dollars, or about eighty thousand pounds, of which it is computed the Hindoo merchants purchase and transmit two-thirds to India, while the remaining portion finds its way into Persia and Arabia.

Five days after quitting Ras el Khaimah we sighted a cluster of islets called Maudes' group. In size, appearance, and formation, they closely resembled each other. They apparently owe their origin to volcanic agency, for they abound in sulphur, gypsum, antimony, and iron. From seaward they present an extraordinary appear-

ance. Seîr Benias, for instance, exhibits a group of rugged peaks, varying in colour; some are black, others green, grey or brown, or of a pure white. I was then slightly unwell, and fearful of increasing my illness by exposure, or I would otherwise have gladly availed myself of the opportunity our touching there afforded me of examining its structure; I must, therefore, content myself with recommending it as well worthy the attention of some future traveller.

A beautiful lagoon in this island extends to nearly its centre. It is perfectly land-locked, and as the channel is narrow, the water within was smooth as that in a mill-pond. Boats resort here in great numbers during the fisheries, and the margin of the harbour is thickly studded with heaps of shells. During the time the crews remain, the masts and sails are converted into tents. The fare of these poor fisherman is very miserable: dates, such fish as they may be able to catch, and water. To such, while cruizing amidst them in the ship, our small presents of bread or rice formed a welcome addition. The next object of interest which we approached was the low sandy cape, Ras Rekkan, which, with the contiguous district, is inhabited by a fierce and warlike race of Bedowins; we did

not in consequence care to land there, but made the best of our way to that island, Bahrain, which presents the greenest spot in "Oman's green sea." The map which accompanies this work is taken from the recent elaborate survey instituted by the East-India Company; it reflects the highest honour on the officers engaged in its construction, and I am proud of having the happiness of giving in these pages their names. Until 1764 we had no chart of the Persian Gulf. Nearchus was probably amidst the first Europeans who traversed its waters. Benjamin of Tudela, in 1292, speaks of it; but it was not until the illustrious Niebuhr visited it that we possessed a chart. The extraordinary accuracy of that remarkable man is as conspicuous in this as it is in the several other branches of human knowledge to which he turned his attention during his stay in the East. Lieut. Macluer, one of the most correct of modern hydrographers, and of whom but too little is known, furnished us with a map and memoir of these interesting regions.

After the fall of Ras el Kymah, it was discovered that the pirates had escaped our cruizers by running into the several ports with which the Arabian coast is indented, and the liberal government of the Hon. Mountstuart Elphin-

stone at once saw the advantage that would accrue from laying open these haunts. In June 1821, two vessels were selected for this purpose, the *Discovery* and *Psyche*, and I give the names of the officers attached to either.

Discovery.

Lieut. J. M. Guy	...	Commanding.
Robert Cogan	...	First Lieutenant.
W. E. Rogers	...	Second ditto.
W. L. Clements	...	Third ditto.
Lieut. M. Houghton	...	Draughtsman.
Mr. J. Anderson	...	Assistant Surgeon.
E. B. Squires	...	Midshipman.
Thomas Mullion	...	ditto.
H. H. Whitelock	...	ditto.

Psyche.

Lieut. G. B. Brucks	...	Commanding.
J. H. Rouband	...	First Lieutenant.
W. M. Lowe ...	...	Second ditto.
W. Spry ...	...	Assistant Surgeon.
Geo. Pilcher ...	...	Midshipman.
Thos. Boyer ...	...	ditto.
T. E. Rogers ...	...	ditto.

In eighteen brief years what a sad harvest death hath reaped in this then goodly list!

Our geographers have conferred the name of

Bahrain in that part of Arabia which lies opposite to the island which is the Tiara of Ptolemy and Icharia of Strabo; repeated mention is made of it by the earliest authorities, and the Portuguese, when they possessed themselves of stations in the Persian Gulf, did not overlook it.

The time is fast approaching when more attention will again be directed towards it. Possessing a fertile soil, abundantly watered by numerous rills, and susceptible of the highest cultivation, we observe a spot, like the oasis of the desert, placed amidst burning and boundless solitudes. Its harbours are good, though difficult of approach. If ever stations must be occupied by the British in the Persian Gulf, let them be Bahrain and Kahrak. I have a great respect for the Portuguese in their selection of stations of importance.

Bahrain is at present occupied by a population of about 5,000 souls; it has already been noticed that the fishery for pearls forms the principal source of their employment and their mode of subsistence, and they otherwise carry on a considerable commercial intercourse with other ports in the Persian Gulf. The principal town, styled Manama, is situated at the northern extremity of the island, which is about twenty miles in length, is narrow and

rises to a hilly ridge throughout the greatest portion of its length.*

It cannot have escaped the attention of those who have turned their inquiries and observations towards these interesting regions, that the Arabian geographers, and those following their example of a more recent date, have laid down a river flowing from the interior, and discharging its waters on the coast opposite the island of Bahrain.

Whether search was made for this by the surveying vessels, and whether it be not one of those numerous streams which, as in other parts of Arabia, have but an ephemeral existence, being merely flooded during the rains and subsiding immediately afterwards, I know not. Captain Sadler, again, in his memorable journey across the Arabian continent, makes no mention of it, nor does it appear in the survey charts. I yet am unwilling to wholly put aside the authority of the Arabian geographical writers, the more so that fresh water is perceived to abound in this district, and there is a curious phenomenon connected with this subject which deserves attention; it is, that in the vicinity of Bahrain

* As I propose giving all the latitudes and longitudes in a tabular form of the various places mentioned in the volumes, in the Appendix, I forbear to interrupt the course of the narrative by their insertion in the text.

fresh water is found beneath the salt; that the inhabitants use that water, and that ships and boats which visit the island are very generally filled up with it. Their mode of obtaining this is simple, and characteristic of the people. A diver descends with an empty skin, places its mouth over the spot whence the fresh water gushes, ties the string, when it is filled, and permits the skin to rise to the surface. At high tide these springs are covered with twelve feet water, and I have no doubt, if search were made for them, that springs of a similar nature would be found in other parts of the world.

CHAPTER VII.

Arrival at Bushire—Stay there—Description of that City and its late Ruler—Karak—The importance of its position considered—Approach Busrah—Description of Khan—Busrah—Its Inhabitants—Its Rulers and Government.

We approached the Persian coast without incident. It consists principally of grey, calcareous cliffs, often rising most abruptly to a majestic height, and exhibiting on its face narrow horizontal ledges of a darker hue, projecting so as to resemble the buttresses, columns, &c. of a building. Other vertical portions obstruct the course of the sun's rays, and fling their shadows on the face of the hill, so that with the position of the sun, they are, throughout the day, constantly varying their form and outline. The appearance of Bushire from seaward is that of a narrow whitened strip on a low projecting front. Brown and yellow sand, or grey clay and rock, meet the eye in every direction, unenlivened by the smallest portion of vegetation and trees: I am therefore not sur-

prised that the traveller arriving from India, with the comparative richness and verdure of its shores fresh in his memory, should feel sickened and disappointed as he gazes on the monotonous aspect Persia wears, the more so if he come fraught with the gorgeous paintings of that country from her poems, or preconceived opinions imbibed from earlier writers, who, as much bewildered by the first glitter of any bauble, bearing, amidst such a scene of wretchedness, any approach to magnificence, join with the natives in exhausting the language of hyperbole and eulogium in its praise. This, however, is no bad foretaste of the shock he will receive on landing. As he enters through a dirty portal, on either side of which some half-clad ragamuffins, with matchlocks by their sides, and the water-pipe, with its everlasting gurgle, in their mouths, and gazes on the shapeless mass of buildings before him, on the wretched hut on the one hand, and the half-ruined graves, exposed to the footsteps of all, on the other—the dust, the dirt, the wretchedness which its narrow streets expose to view, he pauses with astonishment and inquires, "Is this the city of thirty thousand souls, the sea-port town of Persia?" If it is fine towns, therefore, or scenery he has come to seek in Persia, let him rest content

with that which is before him; he will not find either improve by extending his rambles.

The houses and mosques, therefore, differ not in Bushire, save in being more rude than those of other Eastern countries. But its lofty air-towers are a novel feature. Open on either side, and intersected within by walls which direct its course, they catch and distribute the cool sea-breeze through the various apartments of the dwelling. From the constant current, however, it is held to be especially dangerous to sit immediately beneath them. Bushire is a straggling town, occupying a considerable extent of ground. A wall on the land side protects it from the incursions of the robber tribes, who are constantly roving about in formidable bands in the vicinity. To seaward it has neither fortifications, nor any other protection than a few pieces of artillery, so old and honey-combed that it would be dangerous to fire them. Larger vessels are compelled to lie at some distance from the town, and as the tides are very strong, it is with difficulty, when the strong breezes prevail, that the communication with them can be maintained; but smaller vessels are enabled, by a narrow and intricate passage, to enter within a creek, and land or receive their cargoes close to the houses. A few days before my visit a superb boat of 250

tons, her stern most elabourately ornamented, had grounded on the bar, when, without an effort being made to save her, she soon afterwards beat to pieces.

The inhabitants of Bushire are principally Arabs from the opposite coast, who came originally from Abuthubbee; but by their marriage with the Persians, they have lost many of the distinctive characteristics of their race. All (not excepting the governor, who, in compliment to his Arab extraction, is called Sheikh) engage in mercantile pursuits.

The imports are piece-goods, cottons, shawls, and various articles of British manufacture, amounting annually to a million sterling. The exports are bullion, silk, carpets, guns, and horses; but the trade is considerably in favour of India, and the quantity of bullion which yearly finds its way there is estimated at half a million. Bushire is a mere modern town, and owes its importance to the British flag having been shifted there from Gambrun. Even, however, for that brief period, the monarchs of Persia have been unable to retain entire possession of it. Persians have an almost proverbial dislike to a sea life; not so their more adventurous and energetic neighbours, the Arabs, who, at a very early period, took pos-

session of the Persian ports, and monopolized the whole of their maritime commerce. Liable, therefore, to the constant fluctuations which are ever in progress on the opposite shore, this, and other ports on the Persian shore, have constantly, with the states of which they are but colonies, changed masters; at one time in the possession of the Arabs of Bahrain—at another time tributary to Busrah, and, not long ago, in the hands of its more legitimate masters, the Persians. But upon the accession of the present monarch, its government was returned to the hands of the Arab Sheikh's family: it was found they were better adapted for collecting *and paying* the revenue than the Persians.

Sheikh Abder Russul was governor at the period of my visit. He was noted for the severity of his punishments, some instances of which are too revolting to detail. Mutilation in all its horrid forms was inflicted for the slightest offence, in either sex. For robbery, he was inexorable. He was also in the habit of levying many exactions on the merchants, and, amidst other arbitrary measures, compelling them to take his goods at a price fixed by himself; but all now admit, since the brief but ruinous sway of the Persians, that he was a governor not ill fitted for the people over whom he ruled.

Bushire during his time was of more commercial importance—its police more efficient—the morals of the people (deterred, it is true, by his unrelenting and savage character) were at a higher standard, and, in a word, its general condition was better than it had been before, or has been since. The better class of people, therefore, bitterly regret his loss.

After eluding for many years the wiles of the Persian court, who was desirous of appropriating to itself the treasure he had amassed, he was, under a solemn promise of safety, induced to visit Shiraz; but I am surprised, in a country where promises in the mouths of princes are frail as the breath of their nostrils, and where the Sheikh was strong enough to defy their whole power, that he was so weak as to journey there. It was reported he did so under a lure held out to him that he should receive the hand of the daughter of the prince of Shiraz in marriage, but, as may be anticipated, he was seized the instant he entered the city walls, and, in the true spirit of Persian policy, it was proposed to put him to death. Conceiving, however, if they did so, that intelligence of the act would reach Bushire, and the spoil find its way into other hands, they demanded and received an enormous ransom, and then released the

Sheikh, upon the hope of obtaining, at some future period, a further exaction. They were disappointed. Abder Russoul, a few miles from the seat of his government, was attacked by banditti, headed by a man who some years before had received real or fancied injury at his hands. The Sheikh did not disgrace his Arab blood: he fought like a lion. Transfixed with countless wounds, he at length, as his enemies, awed by his amazing courage, ceased for a moment from their efforts, suddenly dropped his blood-stained weapon, drew his cloak around his head, and fell dead. He was then hacked to pieces. His defence, and the number he slew (amounting, I have heard, to seven), form a theme of admiration more pleasing in the detail to Arabs than to Persians.

The few days I passed at Bushire were at the Residency, and I had again to adopt the manners and customs of civilized life. The transition from all that to most men would be disagreeable—rude fare, exposure, and fatigue —to the comparative indolence, comfort, and luxury which I now enjoyed, was sudden and striking; and in their indulgence, together with the delightful and intelligent society with which I was surrounded, I passed several days.

My passion for wandering, as Robinson Crusoe observes, again, however, returned; but before I could renew my journey it was necessary I should recruit my funds. I was not travelling on account of government, but was wandering to please myself: on no public authority, therefore, could I draw for cash, and but for the munificence of a friend, I should have been unable to continue my journey. Should these pages ever meet his eye, I trust he will, through them, accept those acknowledgments which his unobtrusive modesty would blush to receive in a more palpable form.

Caring little, as those who have followed me thus far in my journey will perceive, for European comforts, and merely desirous of living in the same manner as those with whom I mixed, my journeys were performed at little expense or annoyance. Beyond the pang of parting, therefore, it cost me little again to relapse to native habits. Embarking in a small boat for Busrah, with my usual foul-weather fortune, we encountered some heavy breezes, and were compelled to run in and take shelter beneath the island of Karak.

Karak is about ten miles in circumference, and differs probably more with respect to appearance and produce than any other island

in the Gulf; it is encircled by a range of low hills, between which and the cultivated land there is a plain covered with shells and other marine products.

I amused myself during our stay with wandering over and sketching the picturesque and rocky scenery; there was little else to attract the attention of a traveller. But it nevertheless possesses an advantage of position, commanding the upper portion of the Gulf, which gives it considerable importance. This did not escape the notice of the Portuguese and Dutch, who severally, at different periods, possessed themselves of it. The latter held it under very peculiar circumstances; their resident at Bagdad, unable to compel the Pacha to render him justice for some act of aggression, took possession of Karak, fortified it, and intercepted the trade of the Euphrates until his demands were complied with. Fresh water abounds; it is partially cultivated; the soil is very light, and produces millet, onions, and cucumbers, as well as grapes, melons, and figs; water is plentiful, and of good quality, and, in the event of any disturbance with Russia and Persia, Karak would prove to us a most valuable frontier station. Indeed, during the mission of Sir John Malcolm to Persia, it was for some time in contemplation

to send a force there. The lower portion of the Persian Gulf is so exceedingly sultry and insalubrious, that we could never, for any continuance, maintain one there. Of 1,200 men stationed on the island of Kishm, sickness, both amongst officers and men, so thinned their numbers that we soon had the greater portion dead or invalided. Karak enjoys, however, a far lower temperature and a better climate. With little trouble it might be rendered a tolerable residence.*

The weather moderated, and we resumed our voyage. Similar in its general features to the Delta of the Nile, the land in the vicinity of the mouths of the Euphrates is very low, and the approach to it is only indicated by the discoloration of the water, and the high sedgy reeds which rear themselves above its surface. None but skilful pilots, who reside mostly at Karak, will undertake the charge of conducting vessels into this river, as they are compelled, in the absence of any landmarks, to ascertain the direction of the several channels by the nature of the soil which is brought up by the lead.

* Since the above was written, a force *has been* sent there, and an officer of the detachment writes, that although the thermometer ranges from ninety to a hundred degrees, Fahrenheit, yet that the force continues healthy, and that their supplies were obtained without difficulty.

We entered the river, and a singular change in the scenery presented itself. From the entrance of the Gulf to this point, nearly five hundred miles, the whole coast bears but one barren, bleak, and wasted aspect; rarely a shrub or solitary tree rears itself. Now how changed, how beauteous is the scene before us! the banks on either side are low, and the white waters of the river thread their silvery course through an emerald carpet of verdure fringed with palms, and bordered by the golden hue of the surrounding desert; waving meadows of grass, fields of corn and sugar-cane, orchards filled with pomegranate, peaches, apples, pears, and others the richest fruits, meet and gladden the eye in every direction. Along the stern, solitary, and silent shores of the Persian Gulf, the animal is not less varied and abundant than the vegetable kingdom. There the hideous vulture holds its solitary course, or, gorged with its unhallowed food, sits listlessly on the rock, sharing its loneliness with the laughing sea-gull, whose piercing and unearthly scream has obtained for it the singular appellation it bears. On the banks of the Euphrates we have, however, every variety of the feathered race, and their sweet warblings mingled with the cheerful voice of the peasant, and the creaking of nume-

rous wheels employed in drawing water to irrigate the ground.

Nothing worthy of mention interrupted our rapid course to the town of Busrah, which is situated eighty-six miles from the entrance of the river. Towards sunset we anchored abreast the town. The voices of the faithful at their vesper prayer, mellowed by distance, swept over the waters; but so thickly were clustered the date-palms that we could obtain no view of the city. I landed, and took up my quarters at a caravanserai. As I shall have occasion to make frequent mention of these buildings, which are everywhere of similar construction, I take this early opportunity of describing that which I now occupied.

Caravanserais or khans are built for the accommodation of travellers at the public expense; they form a hollow square, the sides of which consist of ranges of apartments, with arched fronts; a broad colonnade, within which the merchant with his goods takes up his quarters. The central space is open, and usually presents a mingled assemblage of muleteers and camel-men, busily engaged in their vocation. Packages, matchlocks, camel-saddles, bales, &c. are scattered in every direction, and all wears an appearance of utter confidence that nothing will

be pilfered, that would be novel in more civilized lands. Groups of merchants from every clime are perceived sipping their coffee, smoking their pipes, and busily engaged in driving their bargains: here there is a party of soldiery seizing some contraband articles they have just discovered; there, a man parading a tattered cloak and a pair of sandals for sale. Altogether it is a busy, as well as interesting scene, and one that the spectator, from its variety, can look on for some time without tiring. I occupied, during my stay, a small apartment for which I paid at the rate of four shillings a month; but others more indifferent may be obtained at even a cheaper rate than that.

Obtaining a horse on the following morning, I rode forth to visit the ancient town of Balsora. From the desert the more modern town has an imposing appearance; its light and elegant domes, its lofty minarets and air-towers, mingle well with the soft foliage of the stately palms, which rear their tall forms high above the plain embattled wall which surrounds the town. A ride of eight miles across the plains strewed with the remains of former towers and villages (— how Sultan Mahomed's owls might have chuckled here! —) brought me to the ruins. Mounds and heaps of rubbish, extending as far

as the eye could reach, are all which now remain to indicate the former extent and importance of the ancient Balsora. There, however, the tombs of Talha and Zobei, two generals who fell at the battle of the Camel, still rear themselves, and are objects of veneration and pilgrimage to the Mahomedan traveller. Let us, however, look to the cause of old Balsora's decay.

The navigation of the river Euphrates for a considerable portion of the year was impeded, either by the shallowness of the water or the rapidity of the current; and, to obviate these difficulties, the ancients constructed huge canals, the waters of which being filled when the river was at its highest, and retained by high embankments, served not only to preserve an uninterrupted communication at all seasons, but also, when the river was too low for the purpose, to irrigate the surrounding country. Palicopas was situated at Balsora, and a continuous line of other cities extended thence to the sea. I know nothing which serves better to point out the vast resources of the country under the Assyrian dynasty than these canals; nothing in ancient or modern times, if we except perhaps the railroads, in magnitude and expense of labour can equal them. Some of the embankments are eighty feet in height,

and the same in breadth at their base: but such enormous works could only be kept in repair under a regular state of society; when, therefore, the government became varying and unsettled, they were neglected, became choked, or burst their boundaries, and the cities on their banks became again abandoned for those on the banks of the river. Such was the origin of Busrah, which city, when the main branch of that commerce which has ever subsisted between the Eastern and Western World flowed through the hands of its merchants, soon reached a high degree of wealth and importance; but the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope again diverted its course, and it then as rapidly fell to decay.

Modern Busrah, therefore, is but a skeleton of what it was. The best houses are the oldest: but many of those, as well as others more modern, are untenanted, several lofty minarets are tottering to their fall, and the streets appear deserted and solitary. The costly laden barks freighted with the riches of Kathay no longer cast anchor beneath its walls. As the port of Bagdat and Kurdistan, it still, however, enjoys a considerable commerce: this may be divided into two branches; the one in horses from Nesjd, the other from Bagdad, in

copper, galls, and guns. It is from hence that India and most parts of the East are supplied with horses. The fleetness, beauty and docility of these noble animals are now so well known in Europe, that it is needless here to dwell on them. The copper is worked and smelted amidst the mountains of Taurus, and floated here on rafts along the course of the Tigris. India returns for these articles, piece-goods, cotton, woollen cloths, and cutlery. The value of the imports exceeds a million sterling.

Busrah belongs to the pachalic of Bagdat, and it was customary with the pacha to bestow its government upon one of his own household. The revenue arises from various sources, but principally from taxes levied on horses, various articles of food, palm-trees, and occasional exactions, called *avanahs*. So long as the usual sum is paid into the Pacha's treasury, no interference is exercised with the government, which, as in other Turkish towns, is a pure despotism.

The inhabitants, amounting to about 30,000, are of the same mongrel description as those of Bushire and Bagdat, retaining, however, rather more of the Persian cast of countenance and figure. The people who occupy the banks of the river do not intermarry with strangers, and have consequently preserved unchanged

the personal characteristics of their race. In this neighbourhood we learn that man in the image of God was first created, and here in his most perfect form is he yet found. Such forms would still not disgrace an Eden. In general they are very scantily clad, and their figures become therefore more exposed to view. Of scarcely a darker complexion than an European, their features are almost of Grecian regularity; their limbs, though rounded, are expressive of elegance rather than strength. Their eyes, lips, and teeth are good. Their hair is permitted to hang in plaited folds as low as their waists.

Yet I was undecided whether I should proceed by the river or by land to Bagdat. I continued to reside at my khan. The only furniture in the room I occupied was a carpet, a cooking pot, and a porous jar for holding water. These were, in fact, in my present mode of life, all the luxuries I required. The Arabs say a mat or carpet is preferable to a couch, because it is more portable, and when one spot gets too warm it can be shifted to another; besides the obvious advantage in travelling, of being able "to take up your bed and walk."

I had now assumed the Turkish costume. A well-fitted white turban; a pair of handsome and spacious breeches covered my lower man;

a highly embroidered jacket hung loosely over my shoulders. My matchlock was of the most approved length (upwards of six feet); a sword of Damascus temper, pistols, and a dagger completed my costume, and rendered me a respectable and somewhat formidable-looking personage. To complete my transformation, I took the name of Kaleil Aga, which in the East I ever after retained.

CHAPTER VIII.

Description of Busrah, continued—Its limits and extent—Unexpectedly meet with an old Acquaintance—Sudden disappearance of Rustom Beg—Is wounded, and returns—Undertake the Survey of the River Euphrates—Quit Bagdat—Koorna—Turkish Fleet—Its condition—Lieut. Lynch—Floods of the River——Sheikh Sook.

My time was not in reality idly spent; I was fast acquiring the language, and had, moreover, abundant food for observation in the busy scenes which were passing around me. My meals were taken in the coffee-houses, where every thing is cooked in readiness. Of the delicacies here prepared *kabobs* were my favourite dish. These are alternate square pieces of meat and onions, roasted on a skewer, to which I added flat cakes of bread, and then coffee. Mutton and round balls of paste, inclosing mixed ingredients, and various other little patties, tempted the palate of the visitor; leeks, onions, and fine lettuces are cheap and plentiful: they are served up with the meat, and usually eaten without salt. The fruits were grapes, apricots, figs, pomegranates, oranges, melons, &c. In these

days of comparative luxury the usual cost of my dinner was one piastre, or two-pence.

A description of one Eastern town is a description of all, and as I purpose to enter fully on the necessary details of Bagdat, I shall of Busrah say but little; no more, indeed, than to point out the trifling respects in which, to my eye, it differs. Situated on one of the high roads between the east and west, travellers have so constantly passed through and described it, that no blank remains to be filled up in its history.

With some trifling exceptions, the city may be said to stand on a level plain; a wall twelve miles in circumference encircles it, but the whole enclosure is not occupied with buildings; some spaces are wholly free from buildings, others are occupied by gardens and dates, but the greater portion by dwellings more than half gone to decay. In proportion to its size, the number of caravanserais and mosques is unusually great, but neither possess any magnificence. The largest of the former is situated in the eastern quarter. The wall there faces the river, and a navigable canal extends completely through the city, dividing it into two parts; a bridge of boats forms the only communication. The streets are in more than an ordinary degree narrow and dirty;

nor are its bazaars, though well supplied, in a better condition. The soil on which the city stands is rough and stony, but the adjacent country, as well as most of the intermediate district between this and Bagdat, is fertile and pleasant. On some of these meadows and pastures they rear vast herds of cattle, particularly buffaloes.

As I was one day strolling along the bazaar, I met an individual, whose tattered garments were but partially concealed by a greasy cloth burnoose. His hair and beard were of great length, but matted, dirty, and uncombed; over his shoulder he carried a naked sword; his head was turbaned, and he walked carelessly along in apparent indifference, humming a Persian air. He cast a gleam of surprise on me as I approached, and passed on. "You are just that kind of person," thought I, "that, unless prepared for the encounter, I would sooner meet in the streets of Busrah than in the desert." The next morning I saw the same figure seated before my door, smoking a greasy pipe. It now flashed across my recollection that I had seen those features before. I advanced towards, and exchanged the salutation of peace with him. "Your name?" I inquired. "Rustom Beg." I was now convinced,—his tones were

familiar to me. "Can it be possible?" said I, half doubtingly, in English, "that you are W——. I had found the "*open sesame*" to his heart. He had before continued unmoved in his sitting position; his head half inclined upwards, and looking at me through the corner of his eye, in a manner most villainous and knowing; but at the mention of his name all his gravity had fled; in an instant he sprang on his feet. W——. had obtained from the government permission to travel, and obtain for them information concerning Arabia. He had been about two years there, and assumed the Persian name of Rustom Beg,—was a perfect master of the language, and, in other respects, a complete native. What has become of this extraordinary individual I know not. He afterwards journeyed into Central Asia, and the last I heard of him was, that he was engaged hewing wood and fetching water amidst the Turkomans.

Illustrative of his peculiar aptitude in assuming native character, I may mention an anecdote, which was recently related to me by Lieut. Conolly (well known from his valuable travels, recently published). W——. was staying with our Persian ambassador, when lo! one morning, he disappeared, and nobody knew whither he had proceeded. About noon of the same day, a Koord made his appearance at the

gate, and demanded instant audience of the ambassador, to which he was at length admitted; he then stated, in the most frantic manner, that he had been met that morning by an Englishman who had shortly before quitted the ambassador's house; that he had been knocked from his horse, robbed, and otherwise ill-treated, and that never should sleep close his eyelids until he had had the blood of the offender. In vain did the ambassador, by offers of money, try to pacify him,—in vain was all the reasoning of others,—till at length, when the ambassador became seriously apprehensive as to the consequences, the individual threw off his turban and his garments, and discovered to them the laughing face of W——.

It is a singular fact, that a small service like the Indian navy should have, in one and the same year, seven midshipmen, four of whom have traversed more of the East than probably the same number of individuals alive—Ormsby, Lynch, W——, and, may I add, the editor of these volumes.

We now lived together: our days were passed in the manner I describe; our evenings were usually passed smoking and drinking coffee at the house of some mutual acquaintance. Rustom Beg and I lived in great harmony, and I was fast improving under his tuition, when, lo!

one morning I went to his room, and found it untenanted. Furniture there was none at any time, not even the luxury of a carpet; he always slept on the bare floor. I therefore inquired of the janitor of the khan if he knew aught respecting him, and I learnt, with not much surprise, that he had risen early, saddled his mare, purchased some grain for it, and a few loaves of bread for himself, which he placed in the nosebag of his horse, and had then ridden off, he knew not whither.

A week elapsed, and still there were no tidings of Rustom Beg, and I had given up all hopes of seeing him for years, when, one morning, while I was seated sipping my coffee in the gateway of the khan, who should ride up but my friend, pale and emaciated. His burnoos and sword had disappeared, and the horse, which before was sleek, fat, and playful, now hung his head droopingly, and was a perfect skeleton. Our greeting was most cordial. A meal was soon provided, and after he had satisfied the cravings of his appetite, a matter neither hastily nor easily accomplished, he related his adventures.

"I had," said he, "found myself out of sorts that morning, and thought a trip to the desert, to visit a sheikh of my acquaintance, would

put me in order. For three days I journeyed without meeting any one. I now found the encampment of my friends, who treated me with their usual hospitality, and I passed a day with them. On the following morning, returning by myself towards the city, I was met by a party belonging to another tribe, who without any hesitation fell upon me. I had nothing left but to dash through them. One I cut down; at the same instant I received a wound in my sword-arm. A passage was now, however, opened to me: but one horseman, as I dashed by, grasped my burnoos. The shock nearly unhorsed me, but I left a portion of it in his hands, and was away, with the whole party in full gallop in the rear. The fleetness of my horse saved me, and here I am."

He bared his arm, and shewed me his wound, which was a deep gash; but his strong constitution, aided by his plain diet, enabled him soon to get over it.

We had passed about a month at Busrah when I received by a courier, one morning, intelligence that Colonel Taylor, the British resident, was desirous of seeing me at Bagdat. This at once decided my movements; and, accompanied by W., we embarked in a small boat, and in seven days found ourselves

a the City of the Caliphs. Proceeding to the residency, I learnt that Colonel Taylor was anxious I should undertake the continuance of the survey of the river, which the recent murder of the officer (Lieutenant Bowater) so employed had interrupted. I most gladly engaged in a task which promised abundant food for observation and excitement. Providing myself, accordingly, with a small boat, manned with twelve men, six of whom were trackers, and the remainder were to be employed to row, I returned to Busrah, where my operations commenced. Let me here observe that though, at the cost of much labour, personal exposure and risk, I completed my survey, and the results, embodied on a map constructed on a large scale, was forwarded to, and received the thanks of the Supreme Government of India; yet my means and resources were not equal to those subsequently brought into the field by Colonel Chesney and his gallant band.

It is understood the details of that expedition are shortly about to appear before the world; and let me not, therefore, further than is necessary to connect and render my narrative intelligible, anticipate his more full and accurate geographical information by remarks of

my own, which are, in comparison with his, merely superficial.

On Christmas-day we spread our sails to the breeze, and quitted Bagdat. I was now a surveyor.

The confluence of the two streams, Euphrates and Tigris, takes place at Koorna, a distance of forty-eight miles from Busrah; hence, under the designation of Shat el Arab, they flow in an undivided stream to the ocean. Between these two points there is never at any time less than four feet water, and boats of two hundred tons burden consequently find no difficulty in traversing the stream. Favourable winds enabled me with considerable facility to reach this point.

During the time of the Caliphs Koorna was a place of great importance, and there is reason to believe it occupies the site of ancient Aphouria, named after the consort of Sileucias. It has now, however, dwindled into a paltry village of not more than thirty or forty huts, occupied principally by a Turkish guard, who levy a duty on all boats passing. At the period of my visit the Turkish fleet were lying here at anchor, and I went on board the largest, about four hundred tons, to pay my respects to the admiral. These vessels are the remains

of the fleet built or purchased in 1651, to act against that which Shah Abbas had fitted out in the Persian Gulf. They never, however, put to sea, but have remained unemployed here ever since, and a wretched plight they are in. One sunk at her anchors two years ago, while firing a salute. Finding I was a naval man, the admiral accompanied me to inspect the different vessels, but he did not, however, deem it necessary to inform me why such crazy craft, incapable indeed of moving from their anchors, had, nevertheless, their full complement of men on board; but the fact turned out to be that he and others derived a considerable profit by supplying them with provisions, and making out fictitious charges for other necessaries.

Near to Koorna, twenty-one miles to the south-eastward of Myhaib, and fifteen above Sook Sheikh, is the canal, or river Hye, through which the waters of the Tigris flow into the Euphrates. Quitting the Tigris at Kooly el Amara, it runs one hundred miles in a southerly direction, and enters the Euphrates by several mouths at Arjeah, one of which, however, alone is navigable. The Hye is dry during the summer months, but in winter, although its average breadth is 150 feet, the

depths are above, rather than below two fathoms; and Lieut. Lynch, of the Indian navy, in a steamer, very recently passed through it. As the country through which it flows is under the government of Montafige Sheikh, passengers are less liable to exactions and interruptions than on the borders of the rivers, and much of the trade there in consequence passes by this route. On its banks I found growing an abundance of the poplar peculiar to this country. The Hye is said to have been cut originally by two powerful Arab tribes, who, when their countrymen migrated westerly, took possession of this portion of Irak. The influence of the tide is not felt beyond the mouth of this canal in the Euphrates, but does not extend beyond Arjeah in the Tigris.

From Koorna to Shiekh Sook (or the Sheikh's market) the distance is 72½ miles; between these two points the width of the stream is about half a mile, free from rocks and other impediments to navigation, with never less than three feet water. For some distance before we approach the latter city, the river flows through a bed higher than the level of the surrounding country; great facilities are consequently here afforded for irrigating the land; but, in case of heavy freshes, or protracted summer rains, the

waters either flow over or burst the banks, causing thereby almost incalculable damage. On the 10th April, 1831, the river began to rise with great rapidity; in twenty-four hours it had gained its usual standard of elevation when at the highest twenty-seven feet above the former level, but the flow continuing, it burst its boundaries, and inundated the whole country. From its elevated position Busrah was saved; but the intermediate country between it and Bagdat, a distance of our hundred miles, presented the appearance of a vast lake, through which we might look in vain for the course of the river. In the latter city, which is low, fifteen thousand people in one night were either drowned or killed by the falling of their houses, the foundations of which the waters of the river had sapped or rent away. Other portions of the country on the banks of the rivers became converted into bogs and quagmires, in which numbers perished; while those who, with their domestics, and even the wild animals—a common distress—on some mound had herded together, were compelled to witness, from similar causes acting on the soft alluvial soil on which they are planted, their date-trees, on which, their crops failing, depended their whole subsistence, swept away in the general

ruin by hundreds. Very little rain falls in Mesopotamia in ordinary seasons, and the country, like Egypt, owes its fertility to its river; which does not, however, periodically overflow its banks, and nourish the cultivated grounds, but is distributed for that purpose over the country, either by manual labour or hydraulic engines.

Similar floods are often alluded to by the earlier writers, and a great one, we are told, happened about the time of Mahomed. The inhabitants bordering on this part of the river are branches of the great Montafige, and very peaceable, occupying themselves with either cultivating the ground in the vicinity of their villages, or tending their date-groves.

From this town to the entrance of the river all is one vast plantation of date-trees, here extending for many miles in one continuous line, or there detached into topas, each of which is enlivened by its villages, neatly constructed of reeds, and modelled in various forms. The huts have a novel and picturesque appearance. Where the banks are low, reeds, rank grass, and bushes extend for miles, forming retreats for numeroes wild boars, and also serving as pasturage-grounds to vast herds of wild buffaloes. Their milk the Jereina tribe make into

butter, and it forms no inconsiderable item in their diet.

Sook Sheikh was built about a century ago by the chief of the Montafiges, then and now the most powerful tribe in Mesopotamia. It is a small town, situated on the southern bank of the river, enclosed by a mud wall, having flanking towers pierced for musquetry. Its site is admirably chosen, nearly midway between the Hye canal and the confluence of the two rivers, and thus forming it into an entrepôt to which those several channels lead. Under Arab, and not Turkish rule, it is the great resort for Bedowins from all parts of the desert, who have on many accounts objections to entering towns occupied or governed by that people; and not without reason, for, in addition to the exactions and insults to which they are personally subjected, their chiefs were not unfrequently seized and confined until the terms dictated were complied with by the tribe. The few houses at Sook Sheikh are constructed of kiln-burnt bricks; but the greater number of the inhabitants, estimated at seventy-thousand, reside in huts, which cover a space beyond the walls five miles in circumference.

Its bazaars are at all times thronged with strangers. Caravans are constantly arriving

from Nesjd and Mesopotamia, as are boats from Grain, Hillah, Busrah, and Bagdat. Horses, wool, gums, and cattle, are exchanged to other Arabs for gunpowder, arms, and cooking utensils. It is worthy of remark that wooden bowls are brought from Nesjd, which would indicate that country to be more thickly wooded than is generally supposed. The merchants, relieved from its oppressive imposts, are exceedingly opulent. No inconsiderable portion of their gains is derived from the purchase of plundered goods brought in from the desert by the Bedowins. How little this simple people occasionally are aware of the value of the articles which fall into their hands. Three days before I had dropped a dagger, worth seventy dollars, on the banks of the river — some Bedowins picked it up; and as I was strolling through the bazaar, I met them in the act of disposing of it and a silk-handkerchief for six dollars. I regained possession of it for that sum.

Determined to see something of the interior, accompanied by my servant, Hadji Yusuf, I quitted my boat to see the ruins of Wasut, which had not, to my knowledge, before been visited by any European. But Hadji Yusuf was a character, and I must therefore first

ntroduce him to my readers. Of German extraction, the early part of his life had been passed as a mountebank; and in one of his strolling excursions he and his whole company, the property of his father, were taken prisoners, and carried to the shores of the Caspian. It was soon found by this people that his foolery was not his only recommendation, but that he could, when it was so called for, in addition to his mountebank pranks, either fight or cook, sing or pray, in accordance with the mood of his companions and the moment. With such qualities, he was not long in finding a master; a Russian colonel, who was immediately afterwards sent into Persia, was fortunate enough to secure him. With him he journeyed to Tehran; but his master dying, left my friend to follow the natural bent of his own rambling inclinations. "I was now," said he, "free to visit the different countries of the East, and for the better furtherance of my views I adopted the Mahomedan faith. As a first and indispensable qualification it was necessary I should visit the Holy City; which I did as attendant to a Persian Khan. Here I kissed the Cabaa stone, drank of the waters of Zemzene, and performed the other ceremonies which entitle

me to the respected title of hadji, with which you are pleased to honour me. I now visited Turkey and Caucasia. In the latter, amidst its snow-clad mountains, I resided some months, well entertained by its free and hospitable inhabitants, until I formed an attachment, and married one of those beauties for which that country is so famed. She died; and, overwhelmed with grief for her loss, I entered Mesopotamia, and set up business as a barber. No success followed the attempt; my wandering mania returned, and from that period, until chance threw me into your honoured service, nearly fifteen years, I have been continually on the move, visiting nearly all Asia and Europe, and a considerable portion of Africa."

Thus ended the Hadji's brief summary of his career. Patient, shrewd, well-informed, and temperate, complete master of the several languages we required in an interview with these people, hardy and brave, I found him not only of essential service as an attendant (assistant would have been a better term), but also a cheerful and ever-amusing companion. Without books, or any other external source of amusement, many an evening would have passed heavily on my hands but for the Hadji,

who possessed an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, which his quick observation and most retentive memory had enabled him during his travels to accumulate. Placing the coffee on the fire, he would seat himself with his pipe alongside of it, and so long as the coffee lasted, so long his conversational powers remained unexhausted; even when the dregs appeared, he quitted them and his tales with regret.

CHAPTER IX.

Bedowin Encampment—Sheikh Jubber—Captured by Bedowins —Caution to English Travellers—Release.

THE first night of the journey was passed on the desert. On the following morning we continued our route along the banks of the Hye canal, and over tracts exposing with tabular masses of bare sheet rock or plains, indurated by the alternate actions of the sun and dew to an almost equal hardness, of a dazzling whiteness. A few stunted acacias occasionally dot the surface of the latter.

As darkness closed over us no sound was permitted to escape from our lips, our principal solace, the pipe, was denied us, the acute senses of the Bedowins, nourished by the clearness and solitude of the desert, rendering such precautions absolutely necessary. About ten we entered a more friendly tract, and our companions here began singing to the extent of their voices. "The camels," they observed, "go the more cheerfully for this melody." The extremes

of heat and cold on the desert have often been noticed ; and the delicious coolness which falls on the earth after the burning orb has run its course, enables us, as we wend our way slowly over these trackless wastes lighted by the silver moon, which holds its silent course above, at once directing our way, and lending its light to our path.

Towards midnight we drew near to a Bedowin encampment, and, in conformity with my usual custom on such occasions, as we were unaccompanied by more than two or three guides, I rode direct to the Sheikh's tent. As I approached, a boy about ten years of age came forth to receive me ; he held my stirrup while I dismounted, and then led the way, and welcomed me as I entered into the tent. Within we found a circle of Arabs, who rose as we entered, and returned in their deep-toned voices their salutation of peace. With that strict regard to the laws of hospitality which they invariably observe, although our appearance, journeying thus alone, must have awakened suspicion, it was never demanded whence we came or whither we were going, but we took our seats, and the consultation proceeded forthwith.

Their chief had been seized and imprisoned by

the Turkish authorities, and the debate was as to the best means of extricating him. All were listening to the characteristic advice of one of their old men, which was, to pay the sum demanded for his ransom—five hundred dollars, and then, after they had regained their chieftain, to lie in wait for and plunder the first caravan proceeding from the gates of Bagdat, which would yield them three times the amount. But my attention was diverted by other objects. The young Sheikh, who had disappeared shortly after our entrance, returned, followed by two females carrying large dishes of camel's flesh and truffles; others with rice deluged with butter, sheep's heads, jars of milk and buttermilk, dates and figs dried together, barley-cakes, &c. &c.

As we plunged our hands in the smoking-dishes, Hadji and I regarded each other askance with looks of infinite satisfaction, acting on Dugald Dalgetty's principle, on such occasions, to lay in provender for three days. Both played our parts until we were filled to repletion; it might, we reasoned, be some weeks before we meet with fare to equal this. Perhaps the Arabs thought so too, as they watched and encouraged efforts which they considered as calculated to do honour to their chief.

When we first sat down two or three of the party joined us, but no persuasions on our part could induce the young Sheikh to do so: he would have considered it a violation of the sacred rights of hospitality, had he sat down before his guests were satisfied. Notwithstanding his tender years the youth performed his duty of host to admiration. It was pleasing to see him, when we had all seated ourselves, stretch his little arms forth, and implore the usual blessing on us. During the meal his time was occupied in going round from guest to guest, and offering him the choicest pieces, selected with his own hands from the dishes. He was completely habited as a Bedowin; a sword was by his side, a dagger adorned his girdle, and in his hand he twirled a crooked stick, which these people usually carry with them.

Our repast was concluded,—water brought for ablution. We rose from the feast, and gave place to a second—a third—until all was eaten up. The coffee was passing round, when lo! without previous warning, who should enter the door of the tent but Sheikh Shubbee, an old acquaintance I had made at Busrah. He arrived with a khelat* from the Pasha of Bagdat to

* Dress of honour.

the Sheikh of the Montifige. It is customary throughout the East for individuals who have distinguished themselves by any deed of importance to invest themselves with an appellation significant of it. From his having been engaged with and overcome a lion in single combat, Sheikh Shubbee took that of "The Lion;" but, brave as he was, the task of approaching the Grand Sheikh of the Montifige was a feat by no means suited to his taste. The wily Sheikh therefore called me on one side, confessed his unworthiness of so high an honour, and proposed that, as a person of far superior consideration, I should undertake the mission. Inwardly rejoicing at the opportunity this would afford me of visiting that celebrated chief, I at first evinced no desire to avail myself of his offer, confessing, however, my willingness to do so if he would previously accompany me to the ruins of Wasut, which, from what we now heard of the unsettled state of the country, was likely to prove a task of greater difficulty than we had anticipated when we left the river. The matter was referred to all present, and all unconditionally refused to accompany us. I should have been obliged, therefore, to have given up all idea of visiting them, but for my wily friend Hadji, who now called himself a dervish. The dispute, as usual,

ran very high : all were talking together, when Hadji sprung from the ground, and exclaiming, "I have that which will decide it," took from his side a Koran, and placing it on the carpet, directed one of the Bedowins to open it with his sword, and according to such interpretation as the text in the leaves thus separated should have, thus should the case be decided.

The result might be anticipated ; his theological knowledge construed the passage into a favourable augury. No further objection was then raised, and on the following morning, accompanied by a party of about twenty, we mounted our camels and set forward at a good round pace, over a level, flat, and wholly uninteresting country. All might have been barren between Dan and Beersheba but that the tedium of my way was enlivened by song and story. Every nation has its hero. England, with marvellous bad taste, selects St. George—France, with little better taste, St. Denis—Persia has its Rustum—Arabia its Antar.

Anticipating little beyond the indulgence of those mournful feelings with which we gaze on the ruins of cities whose "splendour has fled," I was not disappointed when, towards sunset, I approached the ruins of Wasut. Mounds and heaps of rubbish meet the eye in every direction;

broken columns, architraves, and friezes, with fragments of glass, pottery, &c. are strewn over the surface. One small edifice, most probably a mosque, constructed in the fairy light and tasteful architectural style of the Caliphic age, alone remains in a tolerable state of preservation; its dome is entire, but our approach to the lower portion of the building sent several hyænas, jackals, and other wild animals which had taken up their quarters there, scampering off to the desert.

Wasut, constructed on the banks of the Hye, midway between the Tigris and Euphrates, appears to have enjoyed its prosperity at a time coeval with Cufa and Balsora. It even continued long after their importance had vanished a flourishing city, until destroyed by Huleika, the grandson of Zenghis Khan. A few fishermen, who dispose of poultry, butter, &c. to those passing by the Hye, alone tenant it. A canal, broad as the bed of the Euphrates, intersects these ruins; it is merely a continuance of that immense work which runs parallel to and crosses the Tigris at Zejirat, and afterwards connects itself with the Euphrates.

I was busily engaged seeking for some coins, or other indications of antiquity, when my attention was arrested by loud shouts which arose

in all directions around us. A glance exposed to me that we were surrounded by Bedowins. Every hill and avenue in an instant, like as those called forth by Rhoderic Dhu, were clustered with armed foes. Defence against such overwhelming numbers would have availed us no better than flight, had the latter alternative presented itself indeed; we therefore assembled on the summit of a mound, and when our opponents called on us to surrender, or they would fire, we demanded a parley. Accompanied by several others, the Sheikh approached, and was met by Hadji, the Lion, and myself. "What art thou seeking here?" enquired their chief, "surrender, and accompany us to our tents." I was well pleased to get so well out of the scrape, for I knew the Arab character too well to be apprehensive then for our personal safety. Had they attacked us in hot blood, and one or more of their party fallen, the result would have been somewhat different. I, therefore, with my companions, most willingly followed them.

Our arms, certainly now useless incumbrances, were taken from us; tents were assigned for our reception, and guards appointed to watch over us, but in every other respect our condition was no worse than guests. We ate, drank, and constantly chatted with them.

time passed by our party employed in disputation regarding the restoration of our plundered property. Finally, every article, such was our perseverance, including the kehlat, was restored, and we, with many thanks for our hospitable entertainment, parted with mutual expressions of good wishes.

Those of my worthy countrymen who sojourn in the East, in conformity with the usage of the country, go armed to the teeth, but they too frequently forget that temperance of language and action with which the natives accompany such a display. Appeals to the summary decision of a question by the pistol would not, by any means, be safe in a civilized country, and can scarcely be held less so in our people, by a race who are proverbially sensitive and vindictive to those from whom, whether in themselves or their kindred, they have received injury. I have no wish to disturb the memories of those who fell, nor to outrage the feelings of surviving relatives, by the narration of the circumstances attending the death of the person employed on the duty I had now undertaken; but I mention it because, if it meets the eyes of those who are about to sojourn in the East, it may possibly teach them the exercise of more discretion in the use of weapons with which

they invest themselves while in these countries.

Four British officers had debarked at Busrah, to proceed by the courier route to Constantinople. They reached in safety a small town, and there, with the same recklessness and ignorance of the character of the people which marks the career of the mere Englishman in those countries, they paraded the bazaars with their bags of gold sequins, paying exorbitant prices for articles they could have little need of. The evening after they left the village, while ascending a hill, they were attacked by a party who had preceded, and there lain in wait for them. Had they quietly paused to remonstrate before proceeding to hostilities, they might have escaped with the loss of their property, but one of their number, allowing his feelings of anger to overcome those of his prudence, shot dead the son of the Sheikh. In a few minutes, the whole party, with the exception of two disguised as Mahomedans, were cut to pieces; the latter joined in with, and fled with the other natives who had, for the benefit of their protection, joined the English party. On their retreat, they could hear the shrieks of the victims whose throats were cut on the banks of the river. One of these unfortu-

nates was the brother of the British resident, but so little does the influence even of the British name extend to these warlike tribes, that no satisfaction has ever been conceded for the outrage.

We passed the evening at the encampment of the young Sheikh and his companions, who appeared delighted at our return; they had feared we were taken prisoners by the Turkish forces and carried to Bagdat, but merely laughed and appeared to enjoy the joke, when they heard the scrape our search after gold (such was their belief of the real object of my journey) had led us into with their own countrymen. Everything, however, the camp afforded was ours. It is astonishing how a few trinkets bestowed on their children, during my first visit, had worked on the good feelings of their parents; they bought me golden opinions from all. I was greatly amused in the evening, by a disputation I entered into with a Moolah, who maintained that all Christians were either pagans or had no religion whatever. The former he substantiated by what he had witnessed at the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; the latter because he had never witnessed myself, or any of my countrymen, praying. In his estimate of our religious observances the worthy Moolah

was by no means singular; the same belief is entertained throughout the East.

In the morning, accompanied by Hadji and the Lion, I retraced my steps to the banks of the Euphrates, where I found the boat lying high and dry on a mud-bank, and its crew enjoying themselves at a coffee-house, where they had, during my absence, very comfortably taken up their abodes. My sway over them was, however, so slight, that I passed over their negligence with truly Turkish indifference, merely observing that I feared they had not anchored the boat in sufficient depth of water. "We will go and see," said they, taking their departure, and thereby showing that no thoughts of the boat had occupied their minds since they left her. After some difficulty, we succeeded in getting her afloat, and I then, with my two former companions, crossed the river, to wait on the Sheikh of the Montafiges.

We continued our way over plains strown with lime and broken flint until noon, when we halted in the hollow of a waving plain, beneath the shade of a lonely group of palms. The soil now abounded in various kinds of shrubs, some of which were highly aromatic; the animal kingdom was here neither so unvaried nor so scarce as in other desert tracks. Black beetles

resembling the scarabeaus of Egypt, ants full an inch in length, and a large black scorpion, the bite of which is said to produce in some cases death, are seen in great numbers; the latter usually reclines on the ground in the crawling and natural position of its motion, with the tail, at the extremity of which is its sting, extended in the air at right angles to its body: this it darted with much vigour into a stick or any other article which was used to disturb it.

When we arrived within a reasonable distance of the Sheikh's encampment, a messenger was dispatched to announce the approach of an ambassador from the Pacha of Bagdat. As we rode slowly forward, a cloud of dust announced the approach of a troop of Bedowin horsemen, who came galloping along to welcome and escort us into the presence of their chief. Closing around us with loud shouts, each, while they urged our steeds to their utmost fleetness, discharged their matchlocks, the nearer my person the greater the mark of honour. As their matchlocks were loaded with ball, I would have willingly dispensed with the honour: but it would have been out of character, and inconsistent with the dignified station I assumed, had I displayed any emotion; and whenever the dust permitted me to do so, I caught a glimpse

of "the Lion," who followed in the rear with my long gun over his shoulder, grimly smiling approval. On his extended arms, so as to display its full beauty, he bore the khalat ostentatiously before him. At length we reached the encampment, and dismounted without a circle of Arabs who were standing before the Sheikh. By them I was assisted off my horse, and ushered with much state into the tent where the Sheikh was seated; he rose to receive me, and then motioned me into a seat beside him. The silence which was now observed for some seconds, gave me time to examine the appearance of Sheikh Hadjil, who was one of the noblest looking Arabs I had ever cast eyes on. His tall and commanding figure was enveloped in a loose dress of yellow silk, an abba or cloak hung upon his shoulders, around his head a kerchief of the richest crimson and yellow silk was bound, while his hair escaping from beneath hung in glossy curls. His manner appeared affable, courtly, and dignified, and the expression of his countenance frank and manly.

The salutation of welcome was now incessantly repeated to me; coffee was served; the Lion approached, and laid the khalat at the Sheikh's feet. Still I had not spoken; my

only reply to the Sheikh's civilities being a low and silent inclination of the head at every sentence he uttered. Besides concealing my ignorance of the language, such silence was the very pink of Turkish courtliness, where, indeed, if you speak at all in the presence of an authority, it is through the medium of an interpreter. Beckoning "the Lion," therefore, to approach, the Sheikh directed him to explain the object of our visit. The following speech, which had occupied him days to acquire, was the answer: "Oh! King of Nations, his Serene Highness the Pacha of Bagdat, desirous of maintaining the peace and good-will which has ever existed between you and him, has deputed this respected personage, Kalil Aga Effendi, to present you with a khalat or dress of honour; may the peace of God be with him and on you!" When my name was mentioned, I made no other acknowledgment than by twirling my mustachios and throwing an additional look of gravity into my countenance, which, probably, considering the part I was acting in the farce, had somewhat relaxed from its assumed rigidness and solemnity. Casting a rapid glance over my person, the Sheikh, viewing my swarthy features, enquired doubtingly, "Is he a Turk, and can his skin be

white?"—"White as an angel," boldly answered the Lion. The dress was now opened, amidst murmurs of approbation from those around, and, as it was exposed to their admiring view, exclamations of "Waalah!" burst forth from all.

Some further conversation ensued amongst themselves. I then rose to retire, receiving, as I left the Sheikh's presence, intimation that, so long as I remained, he should be too delighted to honour me. Twenty men mounted on horseback were selected to attend me, and escorted by them I was conducted to the superb tent which had been pitched for me. I entered, closely followed by Hadji and the Lion. "You acted your part," said the former, "to admiration; you did not speak one word." * It was then the Lion's turn to compliment me, but his eulogy was far more brief, for he had been invested with the, to him, most congenial and grateful office of ordering our meals, which we had no sooner partaken of than he addressed us as follows: "See," observed he, "how much better you are fitted for personating an ambassador than myself. The Sheikh knows the

* Well may we say, "if speech be silver, silence is gold."—*Koran.*

Arabs, and, had I assumed the character, he would have discovered the matter very quickly, and my place would have been with those lousy dogs yonder," pointing to a group who were slumbering in the sun, alongside their horses; "but the Turks," continued he, "he is ignorant of, and behold how different is his reception of you."

CHAPTER X.

Bedowins—Arabian Astronomy—Personal characteristics—Patriarchial appearance—Amusements—Arab encampment.

WHILE "the Lion" thought that I too was abandoning myself to these luxuries, an idea I by no means discouraged, I was in reality far differently occupied. An opportunity of visiting under such favourable circumstances the tents of the strongest and most numerous of the great tribes of Mesopotamia was not to be lost, and I speedily divested myself of the gravity which I had assumed, and affected gradually to acquire the Arab manners. Conduct so unlike the usual haughty pride of the Osmanli won me golden opinions from all, and in every tent was I a welcome guest. Nearly five hundred of these dwellings were pitched in a space of about a mile in circumference. Excepting those of the Sheikhs' and such as were connected by ties of blood, which were pitched around his in the centre, there was no order in

their distribution, each individual tribe clustering together and occupying a separate space.

Quarrels, which would be interminable but for this arrangement, are nevertheless of too frequent occurrence, and I found that almost every tribe had a subject of complaint, real or imaginary, against their neighbours.

Hadjil's tent differed only in spaciousness from the other dwellings which are of the most primitive order. Strips of cloth, fabricated by the women from wool, are sewn together until a piece is formed twenty feet in length and fifteen in breadth. Rude sticks at either corner serve to elevate this to the requisite height, while its corners are extended and fastened to pegs. A few bushes close the spaces left vacant at the sides, a screen of the same material as the tent divides it into two apartments, and the inner is called as in houses the harem, and is occupied by the females. In the outer room guests are received and all business is transacted. Skins for holding water or milk, some wooden bowls too, or cooking utensils, including those for coffee, completed their furniture. Carpets of Persian manufacture cover the floors of those of the sheikhs. Saddles not untastefully decorated with silver, with shells, tassels, and other gay trappings, serve them as cushions, on which when

seated they often recline. In the centre is a circular hollow, where they light their fire and cook. Around it in the winter evenings they assemble and sip their coffee, but in general the open air is preferred. Here as they gaze upwards on a clear and cloudless sky, lighted up by the starry host, we can readily imagine it drew at an early period their attention to astronomy.

From the Arabs we derive the names which designate our celestial spheres, and which they still retain. Professed story tellers are found in every tribe, who like the Highland pipers strive for the honour of their own to outvie each other. A considerable portion of traditionary lore, in the narration of which all indulge, is also handed down from father to son, and amongst others it is a remarkable fact worthy the utmost attention, that in this, without having an opportunity of perusing either Koran or Bible, they include the narration of all the leading events described in the book of Genesis. Awaiting to take their departure with some caravan, there were about the tents a number of dervishes, or religious mendicants, who, stout of limb and healthy, prefer a vagabond life, selling beads, amulets, &c. to gaining their subsistence in a more active and creditable manner. The

number of these men found in the cities is very great, and they form a considerable portion of every caravan which leaves them. The day after my arrival, a party of Yezeedis on their way to Busrah also halted at the camp. Their figures were tall and spare, their features small, but short and expressive, and their whole appearance partaking more of that of Indians than Arabs. This sect, it is well known, pay adoration to Satan, upon a principle almost self-evident and conclusive to a primitive and simple people; *viz.* that as a servant of God, he, Satan, merely works his sovereign's will on earth.

In the southern parts of Arabia dates form the staple article of an Arab's food; but here, under an impression that they are too laxative and conducive to dysentery, they are not so freely partaken of. As a preventive against such effects, strong coffee without milk or sugar is recommended.

The Bedowins of Mesopotamia subsist principally on the flesh of their camels, sheep, or goats; seldom partaking of beef, from a belief that it is too heating. Oxen are not indeed calculated for the desert, and are seldom found in encampments far removed from the banks of the river. They drink largely of milk, either

fresh or sour. Butter is made by partially filling a skin with milk, and then either suspending it on a triangle or on the branches of a tree, and keeping it in motion until sufficiently churned, the watery part is then thrown away, and the thicker stirred by the hand into the required consistency. The bread, of which they partake very largely, with vegetables, when they can obtain them, is fashioned into thin cakes, which are never baked until required for immediate use. The meal is reduced with the hand-mill so common to the East. Two circular stones are placed one upon the other; the upper having a handle is twirled briskly round, while the grist falls through an aperture in the lower into a wooden bowl placed beneath to receive it. Mutton is preferred to all other meats, and if not boiled, which is almost invariably practised, it is grilled and dried in strips. The latter is much used in travelling. The seethed kid still forms the most esteemed of Arabian delicacies.

Their dress I found was similar to that worn in other parts of the Peninsula: it consists simply of an unbleached cotton cloth, and a cloak striped vertically brown or black. The former is bound round their waist by a leathern girdle, in which are placed their dagger, powder-

horn, and cartouch-box. On their heads they wear the kafeeyah, which is a kerchief striped red and yellow, fastened round their forehead by a braided cord of camel's hair. Their tooth-brushes, fashioned from the small branches of the rak-tree, are not unfrequently attached to the strings which adorn the ends of these, and after a new purchase, the Arabs may frequently be observed passing their leisure hours in twisting or knotting them. Their garments are never washed save by the rain, and never changed until they fall to pieces; and the consequence is what might be anticipated, they become filled with fleas and other industrious animals. To divest them of these tenants when in the course of their labours, they are in more than an ordinary degree importunate; they spread their garments on the burning sands, or suspend them exposed to the sun's rays on some bush, the heat in either case compelling the settlers to migrate.

Arabs and other orientals permit the hair to grow on those parts where we remove it, and again carefully divest themselves of it where we do not; in towns the latter operation is performed by barbers, the exercise of whose profession is held to be unclean.

The personal characteristics of the Arabs, as

forming one of the six great varieties of the human race, are too well known to physiologists to need further description here, than merely to mention some trifling variations from that standard. The complexion of the native of Nesjd or of Yemen, of dark brown or nearly black, is here more of an olive colour; their eyebrows, beards, &c. are less bushy, and their stature somewhat taller. The latter are always worn, though not to any considerable length; neither, as within the town, are they dyed to conceal the change which age has made in their colour; and the snow-white beards of their aged men give them a truly venerable and patriarchal appearance. Their hair they plait into folds extending to their waists; but, during the sway of the Wahabees — who overawed, but did not subdue Irak Arabia, —they were compelled to shave their crowns, an indignity which to this day they complain most loudly and bitterly of. Some affect dandyism by curling and frizzling their hair, and wearing it without their turban. This, consistent with their ideas, is what we call the ruffian style of foppery. Their arms are the same as those I have described in my account of the Johasmy pirates. Their sword is with all the principal weapon. Hurling the *jereed*

is a favourite amusement; and, as I practised daily, I soon became a tolerable proficient at it. A party of five or six mount their horses, and gallop to some open space on the plain. The weapon—in these sports of wood, but in battles of iron—is then hurled at some individual, who by laying flat on his horse endeavours to avoid its course. When it falls to the ground he is to pick it up, and direct its course against some one else. In actual conflict these are very formidable weapons, frequently piercing the body completely through.

The air of the desert is remarkably pure, and diseases are of rare occurrence. Small-pox, and occasionally the plague, commits great ravages, but both diseases linger less there than in cities. Ulcers are but too common, as well as ophthalmia and cutaneous disorders.

Notwithstanding their uncleanly habits, the purity of the atmosphere preserves in an extraordinary degree the several senses of the Bedowins. To noisome smells he is particularly sensitive, and in a town he may frequently be observed hurrying along with his nostrils closed by the corner of his kerchief, to preserve him from the offensive effluvia which rises around. This is one reason why the Bedowins always prefer pitching their tents without, to residing

within the walls. Their eyesight is particularly sharp and keen. Almost before I could on the horizon discern more than a moving speck, my guides would detect the stranger, and distinguish upon a little nearer approach, by his garb and appearance, the tribe to which he belonged. They also possess a quality shared by several other savage nations, that of tracking by their footsteps men and animals. In this respect, indeed, they rival the North American Indians, for they tell not only the number, time, &c. when the party had passed on, but also (so they assert) their age and tribe.

An Arab in his encampment is a different being to what he is in the desert: within the former his time is idly passed, smoking, drinking coffee, and sleeping; yet his steed, ready caparisoned, impatiently champs his bit at the door of his tent: beside him in the sand is planted his spear, his arms are on his person, and at the call of his chief he vaults in his saddle, and rushes forth to battle with all the fire of his nation. In the literal fulfilment of the prophecy the Arab is still a wild man; he knows this, and it forms his greatest boast. His country, unchanged—unchangeable, is on that account more than ordinarily dear to him; and even to the remaining portions of the world

it has ever been regarded with sentiments of the liveliest interest, for the history of a portion exhibits what it ever has been. They eat, drink, and clothe, as in the days of the patriarch. Their tents are the same; their roving disposition is unaltered; they have the same indomitable spirit of freedom; their females go forth to the wells for water, and then, as I have frequently had an opportunity of witnessing, their "men still strive." They have looked from their own desert wilds, and beheld nations contending for empires which have risen up, and are now swept away. The world has witnessed them a wild and roving band, going forth to conquer; nations yielding before them, and the fairest portion of the earth falling to their share. They then adopted the forms of civilized life, cultivating the arts, and supplying the link between ancient and modern learning. But on the desert—the ever-burning desert—there the Arab is, and ever has been, the same.

The Bedowin females are principally characterised by a greater freedom of demeanour than those of the town Arabs; they neither veil their faces, nor conceal, beyond the ordinary blue shirt, their persons. It is true they eat apart, and do not publicly sit down in the presence of men, which would be considered indecorous;

but with these tribes they enjoy much confidence, are often consulted in affairs of importance, and even in some instances have commanded them. Ever cheerful, hospitable, and virtuous, probably to an extent which cannot be paralleled proportionably by an equal number of people in any part of the world, they form, while thus occupying the station which nature has designed for them, a striking contrast to the mere animal women of Turkey or Persia; —softening by their influence the ruder sex, and working into a charm all the affairs of social life. Let me here add my humble testimonial in their favour to that of so many travellers who have gone before me. However wretchedly clad or poverty-stricken, never did I in the tones of supplication address a female for assistance, but my tale was listened to with patience, and commiserated, or relieved to the best their means afforded. My breast swells with gratitude when I recollect the numerous touching instances which I, a stranger, have received from them.

Their dress partakes of the simple character of the people, consisting merely of a loose shift or wrapper, completely enveloping their persons, and over this, when they go abroad, they wear the same cloak as the men. The better

classes display their love of finery in stringing gold and silver coins on their foreheads; the poorer classes substitute lead. Their arms and legs are also decorated with a profusion of rings and other ornaments; their hands, feet, and sometimes their whole person, is stained with henna; and they still retain the custom which Jezebel practised—that of staining the eyelids with the pigment of lead ore.

Frank and manly, wherever the Arab is seen he bears himself erect; in the streets of a city he gives place to no man, and on the desert is the freest of the human race. Sudden and quick in quarrel, his passions are soon roused, and a word impugning the honour of his tribe can only be washed out by the blood of the offender. The Turks know this, and hate the Arabs with an intensity almost incredible. Accustomed to tyrannize over the natives of other countries, they cannot brook the high-souled disdain of an Arab, who views their luxuries and enervating debaucheries with open contempt, and retaliates effectually if they strive to strike, or even by word to insult him. No time is sufficient to efface the stain; if prevented by circumstances from consummating his vengeance on the spot, he will patiently wait, and dog his victim for years, until he

falls into his power. During my stay at Bagdat many instances occurred where quarrels which had originated in the coffee-houses of that city, between Bedowin and Turkish soldiers, were terminated without the walls by the matchlocks or knives of the former, who, by fleeing to their tribes, escaped that punishment which would have been most certainly inflicted on them, had they given equal vent to their anger in the city. Amongst themselves, the custom of the country requires that when a person is slain, a member of his family is compelled to take up the quarrel; and if a compensation for his blood be not accepted, the life of one of the opposite tribe falls a sacrifice to their vengeance. Their quarrels, therefore, become nearly interminable. I have been told of some which have existed for nearly a century. It forms, as I have before noticed, not the less striking feature in the character of this people, that years sometimes elapse before they consummate their vengeance. Turkey, the late Imam of the Wahabees, fell by the hands of a man to whom twenty years before he had offered some trifling insult.

I forbear to dwell long on the Sheikh's government. His power varies much with the tribe over which he rules, but in most instances it scarcely rises higher than that which is exercised

by the father of a family over his children. In war or extraordinary occasions, he certainly possesses the power of life and death, but he is compelled to use it with the utmost caution—one uncalled-for act of severity might cost him his situation and his life. In general, however, he rules through the intervention of a divan of old men—the elders of the tribe; without their sanction little of moment is undertaken. The custom of the country, or the enactments of the Khoran, as expounded by certain moolahs, form the basis of the exercise of their law; but disputes are very commonly referred to the arbitration of an equal number of persons from the friends of either party.

The Montafige Arabs possess that portion of lower Mesopotamia which lies between Busrah and Bagdat. Under this denomination is comprehended a vast family of tribes acknowledging the power of the Sheikh whose hospitality I was now sharing. Their aggregate number is about 200,000, of which it is estimated that 70,000 can be assembled in the field. The Annizah and Jerboa are the two other great Mesopotamian tribes. It has been a part of the Turkish policy to preserve a jealousy, and maintain a "balance of power" with the tribes; for, had they not done so, the Arabs,

by confederating together, would have speedily driven them from the country. The Montafige, therefore, have usually, in consideration of presents, &c., attached themselves to the pachalics, while the others have been opposed to it.

I have already noticed that the power of these sheikhs is very great during war; it ceases, however, in a measure, during peace, and the sheikhs then exercise only a share of that authority which was previously conceded to them while in the field. In peace the time of the sheikh cannot, it is supposed, be better employed than in dispensing the rites of hospitality. Agyl, at the period of my visit, kept daily an open table for probably not less than three or four hundred people, and not less than thirty or forty slaves were constantly employed in pounding coffee. Such liberality is considered as the greatest virtue which a sheikh can possess, and the fame of my host in consequence is widely spread through these regions. In his own habits, however, he was frugal almost to abstemiousness. Some months after my visit he journeyed to Bagdat, and during his stay the Pacha allotted to him one of the most magnificent houses in that city; but the sheikh pitched his tent on the flat roof, and there held his divan, while his dirty followers seated

themselves on its costly crimson velvet divans, which were sewn with pearls, or cooked their meals on the marble floors. The beautiful mirrors were torn from the walls, and broken, that each might possess himself of a fragment; and their sheep and goats shared the apartments with them.

These instances were related to me by the town Arabs, as a proof of their visitors being "wild men," "perfect savages." On this occasion four thousand of his followers accompanied the Sheikh; about the same number belonging to another tribe, the Jerboa, shortly after too entered the town. Of course a quarrel arose, originating, I believe, at a coffee-house, respecting some family feud. After three days' hard fighting within the town, firing at and stabbing each other whenever they met, the later comers got the worst of the contest, and were compelled to quit the walls, leaving several articles behind them, which were seized by their opponents.

The present Sheikh of the Montafiges was Agyl Ibn Mahommed, an Arab of the Shebeeb family. His hospitality was not more marked than was his mild and agreeable government in peace, and his chivalrous gallantry during war. He, however, too soon for the welfare of his tribe, at an early age, met the death he probably

would have most coveted. His elder brother, during the ravages of the plague, had been released by Doud, the Pacha of Bagdat, and fled to the Governor of Aleppo, through whose aid he was enabled to raise a sufficient force to oppose Agyl on the plains of Wasat. After a long and bloody contest, the victory was about to be decided in favour of the Agyl, when an unexpected incident changed the face of the day. At the head of a gallant band, the Sheikh was some distance in advance of his army, and in the act of charging a troop of cavalry, when his horse, which had before been wounded, stumbled, fell, and rolled over him. In that position he was pierced by a spear, and at length fell under a heap of slain, the bodies of his devoted followers who fought over his remains. His fame, his hospitality, and his courage, still form a never-ceasing theme to every itinerant story-teller or improvisatore in the country, and the Arab maidens chaunt his gallant deeds, for imitation and example, to their lovers.

CHAPTER XI.

Quit Montafige Encampment—Semauva—Obtain possession of a Marble Statue—Robbed of it—Loss of Hadji's Slippers—Lemlum Marshes—Robber Hordes—Breadth of River—Boat plundered—Visit Babylon—Reflections.

We remained for seven days with the Sheikh of the Montafiges—my countryman feasting gloriously the whole time; and then, apprehensive lest some one might arrive from Bagdat and undeceive the Sheikh as to the reality of the character I had personated, I paid another visit of ceremony to the Sheikh, received his answer, and bidding farewell to him and the numerous friends I had formed in his encampment, we returned to our boat on the river, to resume my surveying duties, while the Lion, with the Pacha's letter of reply, proceeded to Bagdat.

Directing our course up the river, we passed at Mydain a small tomb, which had been erected over the remains of some Sheikh who had died

and was interred there. In some parts of Arabia these edifices are very numerous; they are of a square form, surmounted with a cupola or dome, and their surface being usually whitewashed, as it glistens in the sun, has given rise to the scriptural comparison, "that all is white and fair without, but rottenness within." At Neghail we obtained a few supplies, but the natives were uncivil.

From hence to Serakat, a distance of forty miles, we proceeded rapidly. The river is about two hundred yards in breadth, and the depth, even in winter, is said to exceed two fathoms. The few sand-banks which intercept its course are easily avoided. Hence we reached Semauva (*i. e.* 'celestial'), which is a small walled town, containing about two thousand inhabitants, situated on the western bank of the river. A proverb implies that all the women here are fair, and the men brave. Near its site a small stream separates itself from the main branch, and flowing in a parallel course, again joins the river about thirty miles from Lemlum. Opposite to this town, on a small island, there are some extensive ruins, which, amidst the Arabs, bear the name of Worka or Orka.

Semauva is still celebrated, as it ever has been, for the fabrication of its cotton cloths,

which are much esteemed throughout the East. After looking over the ruins, which were however in too dilapidated a state to allow of our ascertaining what the order or period of their architecture was, I, with the Hadji, visited the Sheikh, who received us very civilly, and asked the party to dine with him, which we very willingly agreed to do. He mentioned, in the course of a conversation, that one of his people, seeking amidst the ruins, had discovered a marble statue. Upon my expressing a desire to see his treasure, a man was despatched to bring the owner with it into my presence. It proved to be one of singular value and beauty, and I gladly became the purchaser. It represented a priest, with his hands folded in the attitude of prayer, his head enveloped in a wig, with a long flowing robe confined to his waist by a girdle. The features were of the Jewish cast; the nose thin, projecting, and slightly aquiline; diamonds or some jewels had formerly been substituted for eyes. Delighted with my purchase, I was about to take my departure, when Hadji perceived his shoes were missing. Our worthy host, it appears, taking advantage of our turning from him, had stepped into and walked off with them. "Never mind," said I, fearful of my prize, "say not a word, but let us hasten to the boat." This summons

Hadji looked half-inclined to disobey, but at length followed me. Scarcely, however, had I seated myself when I heard a great uproar, and putting my head without the door to ascertain the cause, found a troop of women coming towards us, raising with their shrill voices a diabolical discord. They were headed by the wife of the man who had sold the statue. They boarded the boat in great numbers, and insisted on its immediate restoration. In vain I remonstrated: "You are depriving our village," said they, "of its protecting image; if that goes, good fortune will never afterwards be ours." Indeed, so excited were they, I was apprehensive that, besides the image, they would either tear to pieces or carry me off too. However, to make an effort to again obtain it or my money, I went back to the Sheikh, and demanded one or the other, and Hadji's slippers; but he laughed at our beards. "Was it my fault," said he, "that you were silly enough to give up your purchase to some clamorous women? I thought," said he with a sneer, "somewhat better of you." I mentioned the Hadji's loss. "Hadji's shoes," said he with a scream, and pausing; "it is very true there is a very great resemblance between those I have on and your friend's, but the devil, I see, has

persuaded you into a belief that they are the same; but the peace of God be with you, and restore you possession of the senses you have lost." He passed out of the room, leaving Hadji and I with heavy hearts, I for my statue, and he for his shoes, to return to our boat, in which, a few minutes afterwards, in the midst of the screams and hootings of the people, we pushed off. When we had reached the middle of the stream, and were clear of their noise, I could not help inwardly laughing at the Hadji, who sat looking at his bare feet, and muttering curses on the head of the author of the evil. "Sixteen piastres," said he, "did I, only a fortnight since, pay for them, and that they should now grace the feet of such a dog, a son of a dog, is too bad!" Promising, however, that I would, at the first convenient opportunity, repay his loss, he at length became reconciled to it, and in the course of an hour all his wonted humour returned.

That part of the river between Lemlum and Sembauva called the Lemlum marshes, a distance of forty miles, presents considerable impediments to its navigation. During the freshes the whole district is flooded, and it becomes almost impossible to trace the channels. A short distance below Lemlum the river divides

itself into numerous branches, three of which during the winter season alone are navigable. They have then about one fathom depth of water, and even that depth is only obtained by the natives closing, by means of embankments, the several other channels, by which means the rapidity of the stream keeps these clear.

Infested by robber hordes, the passage through these marshes is much dreaded. The number of its inhabitants is estimated at fifteen thousand. Secure in their own indomitable spirit of independence and the nature of their country, they have hitherto bid defiance to the joint efforts both of the Pacha and the Montafige Sheikhs. They were partially subdued in 1831, but the overthrow of the Mameluke Government shortly afterwards enabled them, with renewed vigour, again to return to their former pursuits, and the exactions which they continue to levy on boats passing, form a great obstruction to the extension of commerce. One cause of their frequent brawls with the Turks and Montafige Sheikhs is, that they are Sheahs or sectaries of Ali, and bitter foes to those who profess the more orthodox tenets.

The number of villages in this district is estimated at eighty, each situated, in order to avoid the inundations, on some rising piece of ground,

and consisting generally of from two to three hundred families. Mud forts or towers serve them on ordinary occasions as places of retreat; but when their safety is menaced by a common enemy, and resistance is no longer of any avail, they fly to the desert, and, by means of opening their dykes, flood the country. Their huts, constructed of reeds, and mostly when standing of an oblong shape with a sloping roof, are broken down and converted into rafts, upon which, with their women and children, they embark. Thus, after an eighteen months' war, when the troops of the Pacha at length reached their principal town, they found nothing but smoking ruins, and no sooner did they evacuate it, than the Arabs, with increased contempt for their foes, again resumed possession.

Independent of what they levy from boats—consisting, usually, of a part of their cargo—these people derive a considerable profit from their buffaloes, which, nourished by an abundance of reeds and rank grass, furnish a good supply of milk, which being converted into butter, finds a ready sale in the Bagdat market. These animals are, therefore, seldom slaughtered.

At Lemlum the river decreases in breadth to one hundred yards, and the banks are very

low; here, in huts or in hovels of sun-dried brick, about sixteen hundred people are collected. Its principal merchants are Persians, who are attracted by the proximity of Kerbela, where, near the remains of their revered Chief Ali, their bodies after death are interred.

Large quantities of rice and other grain are reared in the vicinity of this town. As the stream here is rapid and narrow, the only way of passing it is by means of tracking; for the wind, if fair at this season, is scarcely ever of sufficient strength to carry the vessel against it. I was in hopes at first that the passport of the British resident would have formed some protection to me; but they no more heeded that than they would have done a firman from the Grand Signior. Their first contributions were levied on our trackers, who were successively deprived of their turbans, their sandals, and their waistclothes. They now walked on board, and helped themselves to whatever they required: "Your uncle wants it," was the only reply I could get to my remonstrances against such unceremonious appropriation. Resistance, however, would have been madness, and, in the course of an hour, fire-arms, cooking-pots, and every item of provisions had disappeared; our clothes in which we stood alone were left us. Highly exaspe-

rated at their losses, it was with much difficulty I could keep the trackers to their work, and when we arived at Lemlum they all deserted. Here, therefore, was I left without a crew, or any means for the present of prosecuting my researches. Fortunately, some gold sequins, which I had concealed about my person, enabled me for a time to obtain the necessaries of life; but these were fast vanishing, when I was one morning unexpectedly joined by a fellow-countryman, who, under the designation of Dervish Ali, was travelling in these regions. His real name was Elliot, but he affected the character his former designation implies for the better furtherance of his views. Of a wild and roving disposition, he had traversed the greater part of the East, and had lately employed himself in sketching the ruins of Babylon. An itinerant singer and story-teller accompanied him. The Dervish was not better provided with funds than myself, and at length it was resolved that we should pay a joint visit to the Sheikh, and request his assistance to procure trackers for the river. On our way to his residence we found the people hurrying to and fro in great confusion, and upon our arrival at the Sheikh's residence, we found that the town on the land side was

about to be invested by some Bedowins, who were perceived marching against it. He was consequently very busy giving the necessary directions, and when we approached and stated our errand, he cast a rapid glance over us, told those around him we were suspicious looking dogs, and ordered us to be imprisoned until he had leisure to investigate the matter. I attempted to remonstrate, but he would not hear a word: his followers seized and conducted us to a miserable hovel, into which we were rudely thrust, and a guard of Arabs stationed at the door. As these men cooked and carelessly sipped their coffee, they placed their matchlocks beside them, and intimated very intelligibly that they would shoot any one who attempted to escape. Elliot's friend the singer was the only man left in the boat, where he remained during the night undiscovered, but next morning great was our surprise to observe him rush into the hut, his face covered with blood, his clothes tattered, and otherwise a piteous looking object, to claim our protection. After he had somewhat collected himself, we found that at daylight, feeling very hungry, and not knowing what had befallen us, he landed to procure some food and ascertain our fate. From his not wearing a beard, the peo-

ple in the bazaar took him for a Sunnee, with whom they were then at war, and imagined he was a spy. At first they were for stoning or cutting him to pieces, but finding after some questions that he belonged to our party, and was professionally a singer, and not a warrior, they contented themselves with beating him most unmercifully, and then driving him before a crowd of boys to join us. The singer displayed little meekness under his afflictions, and at first I was fearful he would not confine himself to the volley of abuse and imprecation he levelled at the head of the Dervish, as the author of all his misfortunes. Elliot was however impenetrable to such an ebullition—he listened to all with a truly Mahomedan indifference, and, when the singer's wrath had subsided, read him a lecture on the folly of intemperate and passionate behaviour so totally unbecoming a true believer. Never was a man better calculated to deal with the natives than was poor Elliot.

After some hours' confinement we began to feel the pangs of hunger, and our guards, after we had implored for some time, brought us some cakes of bread and dates, to which Hadji, by pledging his turban, had obtained in addition some coffee and tobacco.

With these and some of Hadji's tales, we contrived to make the time pass very tolerably. The firing was continued during the night, accompanied by the shouts and yells of either party—these as the morning broke approached nearer to us, and more than once, when the balls whizzed past us, I observed our guides looking over their shoulders. Sleep was out of the question, so we sipped our coffee and laughed at the fears of our guard, although no ways indifferent either to the present state of affairs or to their probable result—should the besiegers succeed in taking the town, Heaven knows what our lot might have been. The Sheikh on the following morning gave battle just without the walls to the enemy, who, it appears, during the night had, on more than one occasion, effected an entry within them. Several wounded men continued to be brought past our hut; one had his thigh-bone shattered by a musket-ball, and had moreover a ghastly wound in his head. As he was borne along, he implored in hurried and feverish accents for water: I seized a jar, and without any opposition from my guards handed it to him. The dying man drank, and bestowed with almost his last words a blessing on the hand of the Christian who had relieved his sufferings.

Our state of suspense was at length put an end to by the arrival of a troop, who came galloping along to announce that the Lemlum people were the victors, and that their foes had retreated to their deserts. Some hopes were now entertained of our release, and accordingly a few hours afterwards we were summoned into the presence of the Sheikh, and after numberless questions had been put to us respecting the nature of our employment, with the answers to which he appeared to be satisfied, we were told to quit the town forthwith. But this, I endeavoured to explain, having neither money nor men, was not easy to be done. His answer was brief and characteristic: "That," said he, "is your affair, not mine—depart today, or look to your heads." There was no appeal from, or evasion of, such a decree, and the few hours left us were busily employed in endeavouring to find out how this could best be done. At length we incidently heard that a Persian merchant resided here who had been formerly attached to the British residency; to him we therefore bent our steps (sad and slow), and after narrating our tale, succeeded in obtaining an hundred dollars—giving him in exchange a bill payable at Bagdat. Relieved now from all our anxieties, it was determined we should

lay in a stock of provisions, and feast "right merrilie." When we quitted the town, two sheep, a basket of bread, vegetables, and an abundance of fruit were purchased, and marshalled by us on asses to our vessels. Scarcely however had they been placed on our decks, when a party marched on board, and with their usual cry, "Your uncle requires it," walked off with the whole. The Dervish was furious, the Hadji resigned. "Fate," said he, "can do no more—let us therefore quit this accursed place:" and this, with the five or six half-starved villagers we had hired for our service, we at length effected; nothing interrupting our course to a small village on the western banks, distant thirteen miles in a S.E. direction from the scene of our late disasters. The Bedowins here are of the tribe of Agyl, and are principally engaged as mercenaries in the pay of the Pacha, a vocation they have followed from a very early period. Under the banners of the Moors who entered Spain, they are said to have greatly distinguished themselves, and those who returned to their own country, brought with them tales of their conquests and the vanquished, which are still repeated by their descendants.

The river here continues at about the same

breadth as at Lemlum (about 200 yards); a small island three miles to the northward, however, divides it. The banks are about sixteen feet in height, thickly covered with brushwood, and a few groves of tamarisk. At this village we found the inhabitants more peaceably inclined than at Lemlum. We purchased supplies here, and continued our researches without difficulty or interruption to Dewannea, where the district of Hillah commences, extending thence to Felugia. It is also a small walled town. The centre of the river is here occupied by small islands, several of which during the floods are completely inundated, but now expose verdant and cultivated fields of grain or vegetables—the banks on either hand are studded with villages, and small villas surrounded by gardens enliven the picture. These belong to opulent merchants from Hillah, who pass the hot months within them. The country in other respects presents a pleasing contrast to that which we have quitted; the soft and graceful foliage of the willow now entwines its branches with the date-palm, or flings its shadows over the silent and tranquil waters of the river. Formerly this portion of the stream was intersected at right angles by canals, the remains of

which may still be traced. Preceding travellers have mistaken them for mounds of ruins. They owe their origin to the Assyrian age, and their stupendous magnitude is worthy of that period. It is somewhat singular, that they are carried far above the level of the river when at its highest, and the water with which they were filled must have been raised by either human or mechanical labour. I traced them in some cases five or six miles from the banks. One of these works, the Nahrwan, extended from Tamora in a line parallel to, and at a distance of eight miles from the Tigris to Jezeira, a distance of 150 miles, and its average breadth is 200 yards. The banks of this and some other canals are elevated 100 feet above the level of the country. How immense must have been the labour by which they were filled, and what a picture of the state of the country does it not present before us ! By such means a desert was converted into a fertile province, fed with abundant streams, supplied with the costliest treasures of the vegetable world, thickly peopled with a peaceful and laborious race, and finally brought out a continuous line of cities which arose on its banks. Now, but for the narrow strip on the banks of the

river, how changed the scene! Ages have swept over its gardens, its verdure has fled, its cities are shapeless mounds, and the recollections of their very existence has passed away. Excepting myself, while tracing its course, I am not aware that any other European has trod these burning solitudes.

CHAPTER XII.

Sepulchral remains—Arrives at Hillah—Description of—Babylon —Tower of Belus—Mugalibe—Rivers Tigris and Euphrates— Hye Canal—Ruins of Occur-Guff.

TEN miles from Hillah we landed to excavate one of these embankments, where, our boatmen informed us, treasure was to be found. I questioned them why, if such was their belief, they had not previously sought it? "Because," said they, "it is only by the help of the Feringees we could do it." Such is, however, the general belief throughout the East. Cheered by the hope of making discoveries of another kind, I willingly assented to all they required, and our operations commenced at the sides of a mound at an elevation of about twenty feet above the level of the plain. The soil was a soft clay, and we found little difficulty in removing it. At the depth of three or four feet, our labours were repaid by the discovery of some coffins.

They were of baked earth, about six feet long and two and a half broad; in the upper portion, which was considerably broader than the lower, a space was left sufficiently large to admit the corpse; it was then apparently closed by a lid fitting into a groove, and cemented over with bitumen. We opened one: nothing of the human form which had formerly tenanted it remained but the shin bones and skull; and even they, upon being touched, crumbled into dust. These, I have no doubt, belong to the Babylonian age. Herodotus, indeed, mentions that bodies, after being anointed with oil, were interred with loud lamentations, after the manner of the Egyptians, who followed a similar mode of interment. It has been suggested that such remains are Parthian; but this can hardly be, since that people first immersed the corpse in aqua fortis, and then deposited the remains in vases. These vases are still found in mounds dotting the surface, and raised some distance above the usual level of the plains. This was done with a view to prevent the waters of the river from disturbing the remains; and the same principle induced the Babylonians to select these elevated embankments for a similar purpose.

A few days more brought us to Hillah, which,

next to Bagdat and Busrah, is the largest town in the pachalic; well-built mosques and extensive bazaars bespeak its opulence. A low wall, built on an inclined slope, turretted along the top, and flanked by towers pierced for artillery, protects it from the attacks of the Bedowin Arabs; and the house of the governor is also strongly fortified. The other edifices are neat, and mostly constructed of bricks brought from the neighbouring ruins of Babel.

The Euphrates flows through the town, dividing it into two nearly equal parts, connected by a bridge of boats. Its width was here 385 feet, its depth in mid-channel four fathoms, and the velocity of its current $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles per hour; its waters, dark and turbid, held their rapid and silent course in whirling eddies. Floating on inflated skins, and with difficulty and labour stemming the stream, a number of athletic figures in a state of nudity are perceived dotting its surface; while others are passing either on bundles of reeds or circular wicker boats covered with skins. The number of inhabitants at Hillah is estimated at 25,000; they are mostly of Arab extraction, although numbering amongst them Armenians, Jews, and Christians. Connected with the government, there are also several Georgians and Albanians; they have

always borne a notoriously bad character, murdering their foes, and assassinating each other with impunity. The Bey is selected from the household of the Pacha at Bagdat, and the government is consequently on a par with such a selection. About 300 military retainers are all the standing force; but, in troubled times, Bagdat has always afforded them military support.

Fruit, grain, and other provisions, are cheap and plentiful at Hillah; and boats are constantly arriving from various parts. Those from the northern ports of the Jezerat are usually laden with rice; those from Lemlum and Busrah with dates, fish, coffee, &c.

It was now the period of the Ramad'han, and my boatmen refused to continue their labours; I therefore quitted my boat, and took up my quarters with Mahomed Aga, an intelligent Bagdat merchant: he had resided here for some years, and formed a most agreeable companion during my stay. My host and myself sat up all the first night, drinking coffee, chatting, and smoking; at daylight he retired to his harem, but I was too elated at the idea of visiting the mighty of the Chaldees, the queen of cities—fallen Babylon! to follow his example. I therefore mounted a horse which

had been obtained for me, crossed the bridge to the opposite shore, and after threading my way through filthy streets, emerged by an ill-constructed gateway into the desert. Having then ridden for about four miles and a half across a plain covered with a nitrous efflorescence, and intersected by the traces of some ancient canals, we reached the base of the Birs Nimrud. It assumes a pyramidal form, the sides being steep and rugged, and devastated by torrents. Fragments of walls occur at different heights, and on the summit an upright portion rears itself, and presents at a distance the appearance of a huge tower. Dismounting from my horse, and giving him in charge to my guides, I scrambled over the ruins to the crest of the hill, which is elevated 180 feet above the level of the plain. There was little in reality to arrest the view—the town of Hillah was enveloped in haze, which gave it the same fawn-coloured hue as the desert. In nearly the same direction extends the vases and villages of Tomasia, fronted by some marshy ground in its vicinity, which appears of a deadened white. To the northward stands the mounds of Mugelibe and El Kara. That on which I had taken my stand contains, it is supposed, the ruins of the Temple of

Belus, which Herodotus describes as of a square form, each side measuring 200 stadia, and eight stories in height. The ascent was from without, but within there was a large chapel, magnificently adorned with a superb couch and a table of solid gold. It was dedicated to Jupiter Belus but, from causes with which history does not furnish us, it gradually fell to decay. Alexander, three centuries before the Christian era, contemplated repairing it, but died before his intention could be carried into effect. Other intelligent travellers seek to identify these ruins with the Tower of Babel. In either case, however, so slight are the proofs which can be adduced, that the decision of the question must ever remain shrouded in doubt. I shall content myself with describing what I saw, leaving to others its application. The base of the mound on which I stood covers a space of 2,000 feet in circumference, and the whole roof would appear to be composed of one or many buildings; the whole was formerly encircled by a wall, the remains of which, in the plains below, may still be traced. On the summit of the hill a mass remains entire, 40 feet in height, and 13 in thickness. This is constructed of furnice-dried bricks of a yellow colour, cemented together with a mortar

so adhesive, that although but three lines of an inch in thickness, it is impossible without breaking the brick to separate them. Traces of fire are observable on the walls itself, which has been rent in twain by some violent convulsion, and also on such portions of it as lie strewn on the face of the hill, the surface of which exhibits a blue and cindery appearance. Indeed there is every reason to believe, from the action of the same element in many other places, that the final destruction of the building was caused by fire. To scarcely any other cause could we attribute the reduction of such immense masses as these buildings must have been, into the almost undistinguishable mass of ruins they now present. Mingled with others of a ruder kind, we still find bricks inscribed with the cuneiform character, fragments of pottery, bitumen, and other portions of vitreous matter embedded in clay.

The Arabs employ themselves in digging amidst the ruins, and their labours are rewarded by finding intaglios, cylinders, amulets, &c. At the period of my visit, a Jew employed a party of twenty labourers, and a considerable trade in such antiquities is carried on at Bagdat, Busrah, and Aleppo. The hollows which they burrow, some thirty feet deep, add to the ruggedness

of the common features of the hill, which exhibits other inequalities, produced either by the falling ruins, or intersected by deep chasms furrowed out by the rush of the torrents.

Contiguous to the Birs there is a Kubbet, or tomb, bearing the name of Ibraham Gholil; and the Arabs preserve a tradition that there Ibrahim cast Nimrod into a flaming furnace, from which he escaped unharmed. My guide, on this occasion, also told me that Nimrod received his name Nimmer, a tiger, from his having been suckled in infancy by one of those animals.

Towards the evening I returned to Hillah; in consequence, however, of a strong breeze which had set in, the bridge of boats was removed, and we were ferryed over in a round osier basket coated with bitumen: in other respects it exactly resembled those described by Herodotus. To this day, as he there mentions, one rower pulls towards, and the other from him. On the following morning I rode out about two miles from the town, to visit the mounds containing the remains of Eastern Babylon; three, by their magnitude, are distinguished from the remainder: 1. El Hamra, the Red—2. Mugelebe—3. El Kasir.

El Kasir, or the castle, is supposed to occupy the site of the great palace of Semiramis; its

ruins cover a space half a mile in length and nearly the same in breadth, and rise to an average of about 90 feet above the level of the plains. How gigantic must have been the limits of the former edifice, which still, after the lapse of so many ages, can display such remains. The greater part of this structure appears of brick, containing large portions of chopped straw, but it has evidently been cased with those furnace-dried, which are of better quality; in other respects, the mass does not differ in its general appearance from the Birs. Of the hanging gardens attached to the palace not a vestige now remains; and it is amusing to observe our antiquaries, eager for a clue that would lead to their identification, seize, for the want of something better, on a poor solitary tamarisk tree on the summit of the mound, which would otherwise be permitted to flourish unobtrusively in its loneliness. As the only living thing visible where myriads once held their busy sway, it is, however, a fit subject for regard and interest: it differs, too, in some respects, from the common desert tamarisk; but the same species is not unfrequently found on the banks of the Euphrates. What feelings might not be awakened in the breast of a traveller, who, some centuries hence, should take

his stand beneath a tree crowning the summit of a mound which contained the ruins of our St. Paul's!

A few yards to the eastward of this tree, there is the statue of a lion standing over a prostrate human figure; it is of colossal size, but very rudely executed, and, considering the conspicuous station it occupies, speaks little for the state of the arts at the period. A rude turban covers the head of the man, and the lion is also partially enveloped in a garment. I see nothing to identify this group with the story of Daniel; on the contrary, the attitude of the man, as well as the circumstance of the lion being clothed, would militate against it. I forbear, however, on such slender grounds, to swell the list of those who have visited and speculated on these ruins.

The Mugelibe forms an oblong mound, either side measuring about 250 yards. Here, as with the pyramids of Egypt and the buildings at Persepolis, the sides face the cardinal points. From a distance, the whole wears the same broken and rugged appearance as the other mounds. The upper ridge, though more tabular, is nevertheless very uneven. Here, also, there are walls and other indications of buildings; but time and the elements, aided by the spoiling

hands of man, have exercised their usual desolating effects; and a deep fissure on the S.E. side would indicate it had also been subjected to some violent convulsion of nature.

Quitting the Mugelibe, an hour's ride to the eastward brought me to a pyramidal mound, 70 feet in height, and about 300 yards in length. In the bricks with which it has been constructed, it does not differ from the Kasir; but, from the situation of this fragment on the verge of the ruins, I conceive it not improbable it may have formed a portion of the long looked-for walls.

A few shapeless mounds are now, then, all which remain to us of Babylon! Over these the desert blast howls its burning course, and all is solitude, desolation, and decay. Beyond its Titan remains, there is nothing to recal to the mind of the traveller its former extent and magnificence.

Various travellers and geographers, with immense labour, have sought, on slender grounds or mere conjecture, to identify the mound of Mugelibe with the remains of the Tower of Babel; others, again, have sought that remarkable edifice at Birs Nimrud. Did I conceive that labour, research, or what came under my own observation, could decide the question,

neither should be withheld; but, beyond what I have narrated, I saw nothing which would warrant my forming a decisive opinion on the subject. After a careful survey, I am compelled to admit that I could arrive at no satisfactory conclusion. Notwithstanding its magnitude, I see little to warrant our looking for any very perfect remains of the tower. After the confusion of tongues, we are expressly informed that the Babylonians desisted from their labours; and there is reason to believe, the inhabitants of the magnificent city which arose in its vicinity would not have permitted a shapeless mound to disfigure it, but, on the contrary, would have turned to good account the materials of which it was constructed, and which, in Gen. xi. 3, we are told was burnt brick.

I see no reason to doubt the extent of the limits assigned by ancient geographers to this city. From the Birs Nimrud to El Hamra is a distance of thirteen miles, forming the diameter of a circle, within which mounds and heaps of ruins are every where strewn, and of limits not inferior to those assigned by Strabo and other writers. During my stay amidst the ruins, I purchased several cylinders, which were of the finest baked clay, their surface neatly stamped with the cuneiform character. In my fancy I

could trace a striking resemblance between some of these and the modern Chinese characters.

Babylonia, of which this city was formerly the capital, owed, like Egypt, its whole importance to the two mighty rivers which water it. Both the Tigris and Euphrates have their source in the mountains of Armenia; running parallel to the roots of the great Caucasian range, the former receives numberless tributary streams, and its general course is nearly direct to the Persian Gulf. Its descent is very rapid, and, contrary to the received opinion of geographers, who hold that as a reason for fewer deviations from a straight line, its direction, owing to the broken and rocky country through which it flows, is very winding and tortuous. Its deflections are, indeed, sometimes so abrupt, that they form nearly a right angle; it therefore partakes, more than the Euphrates, which flows on a more general level, of the character of a mountain torrent, rising and subsiding, as may be observed of all rivers with a short and steep course, with great rapidity. From this cause, also, the tidal stream exerts its influence but a short distance from Korna, the point of confluence between the two streams, reaching as far as Negaib on the Euphrates, but not beyond Argeah on the Tigris.

The latter appellation is unknown to the natives, who retain the scriptural term, El Deggil in the upper, and El Amasir in the lower. The Euphrates, throughout its whole course, is called El Frat. With those limited ideas which are common to a simple people, whose knowledge of geography is confined to that which is before them, the Arabs call these waters El Bahr, or the sea; and it is remarkable, that in several passages of the Bible the same general term is used.

An apparent inequality in the height of the bed of these two rivers has given rise to some discussions: thus, the Euphrates flows into the Tigris through the Issa canal near Bagdat; while a hundred miles to the southward, through the Hye canal, the waters of the Tigris flow into the Euphrates. All is, however, capable of easy solution.

The rise of the Tigris is first perceptible in November, Armenia and Kurdistan then being watered by plentiful rains, aided by the thawing of the mountain snows: it continues to increase until May, when it reaches its greatest height, and gradually subsides in August. The Hye canal is dry, and banks and shoals in the bed of the river are laid bare. Boats are then

careened and laid up, little or no trade passing up and down the river.

The summer is felt sooner in Kurdistan and Eastern Armenia, and the rains fall earlier; the Euphrates, therefore, rises at an earlier period than the Tigris; but its course lying further down in the sloping plain through which both flow, its current receiving its supply less quickly is more sluggish. To obviate this inequality, and to carry off the superabundant waters of either, canals connecting the two streams were constructed; and the want of them, as I shall show in my subsequent account of the flood at Bagdat, is (now their beds are obstructed or filled up) often felt.

The Rhamad'han was concluded; our boatmen, who had spent all their wages in indulgences during the feast, again assembled, and I took leave with some regret of my hospitable entertainer, to continue my survey of the river, which I followed without interruption to the canal Nahr Malka, where I again debarked to proceed to Bagdat. Prior to the irruption of the Feluzan Turks, a canal (the Nahr Issa), extending from Anbar to Bagdat, connected the waters of the Euphrates with those of the Tigris. This was the most northern of four others from

or near to Anbar, by which the communication between the two rivers was maintained, and the superabundant waters of either carried off. Zenophon describes them in his time as very deep, and through which large barges laden with corn sailed, and notices they were a farsang distant from each other. Abdulfeda observes, that the Nahr Issa flowed from the Euphrates, where stood the city of Anbar, across the narrow portion of the Yczirat to the Tigris, into which river it empties the waters of the Euphrates, the spot where its estuary is low and marshy, about three miles above Bagdat. The other three great canals were the Kothar, Sarsar, and Malik; the two latter under the designation of Fluv. Regium and Malik were traversed by Trajan; and Julian cut another branch from the latter, through which his fleet entered the Tigris.

No distinct traces exist of the Nahr Issa; but at Akker Kuf I discovered some mounds, which, from their sites, may be the remains of its embankments. As the distance, however, is only 34 geographical miles between the two rivers —the intermediate country is low and marshy— a succession of alluvial deposits are often flooded, and they are thus connected together. In some seasons the inundations admit of rafts

passing from the gates of Bagdat to Feluzia; and during the great flood of 1831, boats passed by the high road from Bagdat to Hillah, a distance of 54 geographical miles—a route along which the traveller found at other periods well-built khans and villages. In such a flat country subsidence soon fills up the canals; and, after eight centuries, we can scarcely expect to discover any traces of them.

Doud, the pacha of Bagdat, intended to renew these works, but death prevented him. Where labour is cheap, and the nature of the soil presents every facility he could wish, his command of resources would have found little difficulty in effecting his purpose. Had he done so, he would have conferred an immense benefit on the country: its advantages to commerce are obvious; while the security of the country, by guarding it against floods, would have been greatly increased. During the Median and Babylonian ages, similar works, by irrigating the country and maintaining a proper level between the two rivers, converted what is now nearly a desert into a fertile and well-populated country.

Aubar is an ancient city, mentioned in history as the granary of the kings of Persia; it was afterwards known by the appellation of Hasha-

mezah, from the caliphs of that house taking up their summer residence there: the Arabs of the present day call it Feluzia. It continued a flourishing place until Haluka, the grandson of Zenghis Khan, took Bagdat. His troops then plundered and destroyed this town and Wasut, since which time both it and the contiguous canals were neglected.

This is not, however, the point, as has been very generally supposed, where the two rivers nearest approach each other. Between the ruins of Seleucius on the right bank of the Tigris, and the village of Ravennea on the Euphrates, the distance is only ten geographical miles.

The ruins of Occur-guff are situated about eight miles from Bagdat; they form an isolated mass of sun-dried bricks, about 220 feet in height and seventy in diameter. In its vicinity the ruins of a city are strewn around. From the similarity of its name and the style of architecture, which is of a very early period, I am induced to believe this is the Accad of Scripture, spelt Akka in the Assyrian MSS.; and about here stood Litaze, near which city the ten thousand crossed the Tigris.

CHAPTER XIII.

Quit Bedowin Encampment for Bagdat—Optical Delusions—Tomb of Zobeide—Moving appearance of a Cafila—Author entertains his Bedowin Friends.

PRIOR to entering the city of the Kaliphs, I determined to avail myself of Sheikh Subhe (the Lion's) invitation to pass a few days with his tribe, which was encamped four days' journey to the southward. With them I passed an agreeable time — hunting, throwing the jereed, and other exercises; and at length, with regret, disclosed my intentions of quitting my hospitable entertainers for Bagdat. The last few miles of our route to that city led over a dreary waste, without herb, without man. We were but four in number, and held our way in silence, occasionally alarmed by an object rising on the horizon, as a strange sail shows itself to the mariner at sea; now assuming the appearance of a group of Bedowins mounted on their camels, or now that of a solitary wanderer; the illusion, in either case, vanishing as we approached, and discovering the cause of our

fears to be a stone, or some withered shrub, which the effects of terrestrial refraction had distorted into such " unreal shapes."

The sun rose, and Bagdat, although so many miles distant, was suspended as it were in mid-air before us; the rosy tints of morn illumined its gilded domes, its minarets, and other gorgeous signs of Eastern dominion and magnificence. It was indeed a scene delightful to the eye, which had so long been pained by the arid hue of the desert. I gazed on its varying and changeful forms until I could almost dream their realities, but the illusion was transitory; the sun, by exerting the increasing influence of its beams, soon restored the air to its wonted state, and the whole, like a beauteous and fairy vision, vanished from the sight, leaving still, however, in the memory, a fresh and vivid recollection of its recent existence.

In order to avoid some marshy ground, we fetched a long detour, and were compelled to approach the town from the northward. After passing through a dense grove of date-palms, we arrived opposite to the tomb of Zobeide. A thousand pleasing recollections rushed into my memory when I looked on that plain and simple edifice, which covered the remains of the spouse of the Kaliph Haroun el Rashid, the

hero of the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights." It stands on a sloping eminence, within an extensive cemetery just without the walls of the town, and presents merely a building of an octagonal shape, 30 feet in diameter, and surmounted by a spire. The former exposes two ranges of windows, the upper of which presents the flattened, and the lower the pointed arch. The spire is a mere sharp-pointed cone, ornamented without with convex divisions corresponding to concave arches within. The interior is occupied by three oblong buildings of masonry, coated with lime. A modern Pacha and his wife have now the honour of reposing beside the remains of the fair Persian, and an inscription over the porch testifies these remains of mortality were deposited there nine centuries after the favourite of the Kaliph.

We approached the N. W. gate — several well-beaten tracks led from all directions to its porch—a few gardens encircled by mud walls shew themselves in scattered groups, which, together with the date-palms fringing the borders of the river, are all of vegetable life to denote our approach to the abode of man; otherwise the intermediate country presents one vast flat, destitute of trees or villages, either of a

dusky brown or hue of dazzling white. A Cafilla on the previous evening from Kermanshaw had encamped without the walls, and as we approached, were preparing to enter the city. Its busy groups, as they lifted their bales, fastened them to their beasts, or pursued their various other preparatory avocations, were heard either in shrill notes abusing each other or the animals they were lading; groups of camels were perceived in every direction—some in their recumbent position, already laden, roaring and making efforts to rise; others approaching led by little boys from afar in single file, while troops of horse were scouring over the plains in all directions, amusing themselves with hurling the jereed. Merchants in the midst of these motley groups were perceived robing themselves in their richest garments, that they might enter the city with becoming dignity.

Following a line of asses laden with brushwood from the surrounding desert, our party, unnoticed by all, entered the city gates. On either side of the porch sat a group of Turkish soldiers, whose polished arms were suspended with their powder-horns over their heads on the wall. Their office was to examine attentively those who entered the city—levying

a duty on the various articles which were permitted to enter, and seizing such as were contraband; this employment enabled them, under several pretexts, to levy exactions on passengers. They scowled upon me as I passed, and one even put his hand on the bridle of my camel to stay its progress; but a remark from his companion induced him to remove it, and concealed by the closeness which my dress and appearance bore to the rest of my companions, I was merely included in the half-muttered curse bestowed on them, and permitted to pass on. Thus the Turk, when within his own city, cannot levy his exactions to any extent on the free-born sons of the desert. Some time before my arrival, I had written to have a house prepared for me, and accompanied by the merchant who had arranged this, and who I had little difficulty in finding, I repaired to my dwelling, and found it a very comfortable residence, affording sufficient room to accommodate my Bedowin companions, who, with much satisfaction, took up their quarters with me. I hope it is almost needless to say, that I considered it both my duty and pleasure to repay them for the hospitality I had shared with them in the desert. I was, in fact, unremitting in my attention. Every delicacy the town afforded

was theirs, and at length, after feasting most heartily for ten days, Sheikh Subhe and his two friends took their leave. Sincere and mutual expressions of regret at parting were mingled with hopes that we might meet again. A few trinkets, which I purchased and sent back to their children, rivetted to me the attachment of this simple people.

It is time, however, that I say something of Bagdat; and as works of reference may not be at hand with those who peruse these pages, they will not perhaps be displeased if I present a very brief abstract of its rise and decline: for it has been the singular fate of the immense empire of which this city was the capital, while it faded from the memory of man, to have also in a great measure escaped the pen of the historian. The heroes of Greece and Rome have been sung, and handed down to us with traditional admiration, while little in Europe of the vast Arabian empire has been known, and still less remembered. The works of many of the earlier writers of this nation, either false in themselves, or rendered so by prejudiced opponents, are meagre, unsatisfactory, and but too often occupied by their own internal and interminable broils; and those to which we can obtain access but ill supply the place of better works

of reference, which I believe once had existence, but are now missing.

It is unnecessary in this place to dwell on the early history of the Arabs. Their origin is recorded by the inspired writer in the book of Genesis, which, as I have already noticed, is still a portion of their existing traditions. This, with their never-varying mode of life, may therefore be received as undying evidence of the fulfilment of the prophetic prediction which accompanied the birth of their common parent, Ishmael.

For nearly twenty-five centuries have they since, unaspiring and unassuming, occupied their own burning and trackless deserts. In the history of the world, we however meet with casual traces of them: we hear of them as traders; we find Cambyses trading with them when he entered Egypt; Philip, the Roman emperor, claiming them for countrymen; and numbers of them suffering martyrdom under Dioclesian. Their religion consisted in the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. Distinguished by their fierce barbarity, and their country presenting nothing to tempt or reward the encroachments of ambition, they lived in a state of independence which was never completely subverted. Their manners and customs were

of a different stamp to all around; they existed befriended by none, and opposed to all. Their petty chieftains, emulated to a common ferocity, and intent on family agrandizement, struggled against, conquered, or fell before each other. Yet, notwithstanding this petty warfare, which then, as now, was never very bloody, the population of Arabia increased and extended itself over a country that encouraged no industry, and could reward no toil.

At length, as the soil teemed with a redundant population, a man arose, who, by uniting them in one body, cementing them by a common bond of sympathy and feeling, led them forth to deeds which broke, *without* "casting their shadows before," on the astounded and slumbering world. At every step we take in tracing the rise and progress of the Mahomedan power; as we view the Kaliphs, with startling rapidity, overthrowing kingdoms and empires—ranging through peaceful populations to convert or to enslave them, or following up victory by desolation—we are hurried along with a portion of the enthusiastic feelings which accompanied those who achieved such Eastern glories. Their very indistinctness, through the lapse of ages, confers on them a degree of interest and glory, with which our

imagination cannot invest deeds more palpably presented before us.

Mahomed was of noble lineage, and the Arabs claim him as the direct representative of Ishmael. Persecution after he had first preached his doctrines drove him from his own to other districts; hence, he came forth a conqueror, to re-enter in triumph the place of his birth. Exciting his followers by predictions of their future success, and tempting them by a scheme of religion adapted to their passions, he led them on during his life from victory to victory. After his death, the faith he had propagated was endeared to them, as the legacy of one who had descended from heaven to ennoble and elevate them; while the recollection of his fame and his exploits aroused the ambition of a martial and imaginative people. Under their Kaliphs, a nation of robbers and shepherds therefore sprung forth, as if by magic; they acquired dominion, and soon attained vigour and majesty. Not ten years after the death of their prophet, the Arabian empire stretched from the Ganges to the Atlantic, from the Pyramids to the deserts of Southern Africa; twenty thousand cities were numbered under its government; and neither Cyrus, with Crœsus as his slave and Babylon

for a province, nor Alexander, sighing for fresh worlds to conquer, enjoyed a dominion equal to that of the successors of the prophet. Victory had followed victory—nation after nation had fallen—Africa had been overrun, Asia was shaken to its foundations, and Europe threatened with the flood. With unconquered energy, all obstacles, whether of nature or art, were overcome.

But the decline and fall of the Arabian empire was no less rapid than its rise. There was a want of cohesion in the system, a deficiency throughout of some ruling mind and principle; the whole fabric separated into dynasties, forming for a while portions of a great confederacy, rather than the provinces of a mighty dominion.

But, to return to Bagdat. In the hands of the Abbasides, this city, in 762, arose on the banks of the Tigris, and, under their dominion, for five centuries it formed the costly capital of an immense empire. The authority gained by their arms had now become settled; fanaticism had subsided, and ambition for power gave place to the purer enthusiasm of intellect.

Becoming stationary, their military pursuits were laid aside for the gentler arts of peace; their minds became cultivated and polished; the barbarity of their disposition vanished away;

and, independent of their Kaliphs, we can scarcely recognize the descendants of those stern warriors who completed the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, and whose career had been marked by blood and dismay.

To witness a band of religious enthusiasts emerging from a desert, conquering a world, and founding a mighty empire, may well animate and inspire; but such feelings give place to others of wonder and admiration, when we see the same people applying themselves to the invention and restoration of all modes of human improvement. The vulgar may regard the Arabs as mere wild, rapacious, and successful bigots, incapable of lofty sentiment in themselves, and hostile to its appearance in others: but such is not the case. Wrapped in the mist of the darker ages, it requires the researches of the scholar to discover and point out how much we are indebted to the successors of Mahomed for much of that intellectual refinement, that active cultivation of powers, talent, and mental ability, which has enabled more modern Europe to burst through the gloom of ages, and work a mighty moral change throughout the whole civilized world.

When Haroun el Rashid ("the Just") reigned at Bagdat, vast as was the extent of Mahomedan dominion, the learning cultivated

throughout the Kaliphat was not less admirable and extensive than within the seats of the emperor, or the palaces of Cordova, and the glare of their conquest was less than the brilliancy of their knowledge. Their power was then increased in splendour, by the extension of civilization and the growth of improvement. From their gorgeous palaces at Bagdat the life-blood of knowledge freely circulated through every artery of the mighty empire their valour had won or created. From every land was knowledge obtained, in every nation was it encouraged.

For five centuries did the reputation of Bagdat for genius, enterprise, and learning, continue high; the burning light of its philosophers shone, when all around elsewhere was dark as any within the history of man. This period will ever be remembered with admiration and astonishment, so long as the majestic ruins of their temples remain, to extort our eulogy and to command our respect. To this remarkable people are we, therefore, indebted for the connecting link between ancient and modern learning. We owe to the Arabs our numerical characters; the manufacture of cotton, paper, and, perhaps, gunpowder; the first use, if not the invention, of the compass; and an earnest research and experimental inquiry into chemistry.

If it be also true, that we are now little indebted to the Arabs for their discoveries in astronomy, they have at least the merit of imparting to their immediate descendants an earnest spirit of inquiry, by which alone, in its present advanced state, it could have been presented to us. Nor can we, when we look to the architectural adornments of this people (witness the Alhambra, and the mosque of Omâr at Jerusalem), view the boldness of their designs, their gigantic proportions, their delicate fretwork and elaborate combination of ornament, but yield the palm to the graceful power of the Saracenic architects.

From regarding such a rise and greatness, it is melancholy to turn to its decline and fall. The Arabian empire now depended more on the forbearance of its foes than on its own independent capacity and vigour; and when the hardier inhabitants of the more northern portions of the globe became, by the spread of the Mahomedan faith, animated by the same spirit as formerly impelled themselves, they became easy victims to Bactrian aggression. In a word, Bagdat fell; the majestic Kaliphat departed; the Abbasides became subjected, in the sway of the Turks, to a despotism which has ever since continued its demoralizing and desolating influence; which has reduced a scene of bye-

gone glories to a wilderness, whose wars accumulate, and appear more dismal from the absence of all just anticipations of relief and resuscitation.

The whole of this fair portion of the East has since bowed beneath the yoke of its second Mahomedan invaders, and all now is a mean, miserable district, marred by the brutalizing temperament of its possessors, and equally valueless and polluted.

It were a needless and ungrateful task to follow successively the gradual steps to its decline and present miserable state; a good account will, however, be found in Rousseau's description of the pachalic at Bagdat. I shall, therefore, confine myself to that which occurred during or immediately preceding my visit.

Doud, the late viceroy of Bagdat, was the slave of Suliman, one of its former pachas. Inheriting all his ambitious principles, and no small portion of his wealth, by following the profession of a moolah, and residing within the sanctuary of Abdul Cawdor, the patron saint of Bagdat, he contrived to live through the reigns of his two successors. Both these, from their exactions and withholding the customary tribute, had fallen sacrifices to the vengeance of the Porte. Bagdat, next to Egypt, is the

richest pachalic in the gift of the Porte; but, from the idleness of the rule but too frequently exercised over it, the dues and taxes become expended either on military parade or useless expeditions against the Bedowins; while the commerce, and even the government, fall into the hands of a few Jews and Armenians. The necessaries of life become scarce, and the Arabs and Persians flock to a cheaper and safer mart.

Such was the state of the country in 1817, when Doud made application for the vacant office. With his large establishment, and seeming submission to their will, it was thought he could have less inducement to plunder the inhabitants, and more to discharge the required tribute; and Doud with much ceremony was constituted a pacha of three tails, and with seeming humility took upon himself the reins of government. But when in the course of a year he had consolidated his power, and attached by presents the soldiery to him, securing the good will also of the merchants and people by his impartial administration of justice, he openly threw off the mask, and boldly stated his intention for the future to refrain from payment of any duties to the Porte.

One of his first objects now was to reduce the Arabs to obedience. This was a difficult task; but

as they had continued to interrupt the trade to the capital, and to cut off all its supplies, its necessity was continually urged upon him. By bribing one, by instigating a second to act against a third, and by various other artifices, he at length effected his purpose; and in a few months he reduced the whole to a more complete obedience than they had paid for many reigns before or have done since.

During a tolerably peaceful reign which followed, trade was encouraged, and Bagdat again became, as before, a rich emporium. With an army of 150,000 men, well equipped, and disciplined by European adventurers, a well-stored arsenal and treasury, Doud was in a condition to oppose any force which the Grand Seignior could send against him. Similar in his character, his talents, and his views, to the present ruler of Egypt, like him he meditated a complete dismemberment from the Turkish empire, and the establishment, with an increase of territory, of the settled independence of his own. Every nerve was, therefore, now strained to increase his influence with the Arab tribes, in whom consists, when opposed to a foreign power, the strength of the pachalic. Repeated firmans had arrived for the head of the Pacha; but previous intelligence was always conveyed

to him, and the messengers were cut off shortly after or before their arrival.

Just previous to my arrival, one of these messengers, bearing a firman, together with a mandate from the Ulema, denouncing the Pacha as a renegade and outlaw, had been seized and killed; and the offensive papers, and the body of the Cappige (messenger of the gate) were placed together in a sack, and thrown into the river.

The Porte were, it appears, hardly prepared for the late outrage; and before a month had elapsed, intelligence arrived that a large force, under Ali Reza Pacha, was assembled at Aleppo, for the purpose of deposing Doud. Strong in his own resources, however, the power of the Porte was so little feared by Doud, that he contented himself with directing a force of 30,000 horse to take the field, and protect the northern Jezerat, and the caravans of the city, from the attacks of a tribe which had been purchased into the Pacha's interest. Some little skirmishing followed, and the latter were finally beaten back to their deserts.

A curious incident on this occasion exhibits, that notwithstanding they may be hired to fight against each other, yet that the Arabs still look to their common origin. The Sheik of a rival

tribe and his two sons had been taken prisoners, and were now brought bound into the presence of the Pacha: "Let them be forthwith led to death," said the Pacha, "and their carcases thrown without the walls to the hogs." Several Arab chiefs immediately remonstrated; and upon being threatened with a similar fate, left the presence, joined their tribes, decamped to their desert, and demanded the release of the Sheik and his sons, or they would immediately join the Sultan's party. The whole of the Bedowins, considering it a common cause, flocked to join their standard, and the Pacha, however unwilling, was compelled to accede to their demands.

Notwithstanding their fierce and predatory habits, and their vindictiveness when excited, the Arabs are certainly not a cruel people; and the joy they appeared to experience when the prisoners were delivered to them, testified as much pleasure as if they had rescued some of their own tribe. When they entered the town, they were borne, to the great mortification of the Turks and scandal to the Pacha, in triumph through it.

Such was the political state of Bagdat at the period of my visit; its appearance, commerce, and resources, I shall now proceed to describe.

CHAPTER XIV.

Bagdat, its Situation—Limits—Fortifications—Palaces—Mosques Calenders—Baths—Gloom of Streets—Catching Dogs—Amusements—Dress—Population—Commerce—Government.

BAGDAT is situated on a low and level plain, the river Tigris flowing between and dividing it in two portions, the larger of which is situated on the N.E. side, the communication between the two parts being maintained by a bridge of boats. As the metropolis of the Saracenic empire, this city formerly was extremely extensive and populous; but possessed alternately by Arabs, Persians, and Turks, and reduced by misrule and despotism, its present appearance, contrasted with its former grandeur, elegance, and amount of population, offers but a miserable contrast. It still, however, maintains its rank as the most considerable place of trade in this portion of Asia, and also as the great frontier town of the Turkish empire towards Persia.

Its fortifications, poor as they appear, in a

country where artillery is rarely brought into the field, are sufficient to oppose a successful resistance to the Persians and Wahabees. The dominions of the pachalic nominally extended, at the time of my visit, from Busrah on the north to Morden on the south; from the confines of Persia and Kurdistan on the east, to the frontiers of Syria and Palestine on the west; but much of this space was occupied by Bedowins or Kurds, whose acknowledgment of the Pacha's authority was more nominal than real.

A plain embattled wall, encompassed by a ditch, surrounds the town, which occupies a space seven miles in circumference. As at Busrah, however, large portions of this space are left unoccupied by houses, and are covered with groups of the date-palm. The wall is built entirely of brick, and has at different periods undergone considerable repairs: round-towers at irregular distances, on which are mounted brass artillery, serve to flank it. The ditch has been merely excavated, and is not faced either by masonry or brickwork. The gates are three in number. The one by which we entered, and the most frequented, is on the N.W. side; a second is on the N.E., and the third in the S.E. quarter. They are all lofty arches, of the pointed form, the entrance to which is bordered on each side

by a succession of pointed ridges or bands, which, taking nearly the same direction as the arch, meet in its upper part; these are of graceful proportions and well sculptured. An inscription over the one by which I entered certifies it to have been built in the tenth century of our era. Handsome as they formerly were, both they and the wall (which latter in some places, both from the nature of the materials, and the regularity and symmetry with which the bricks are laid, equals any mural masonry I ever saw) are permitted now to fall rapidly to decay.

The principal public edifices within an eastern city are its mosques, caravanserais, colleges, baths, and the palace of the governors.

The latter is a mean building, erected in the N.W. quarter of the city, and differing but little, save in spaciousness, from the other dwellings. Constructed, indeed, at different periods, without regard to any original plan, it presents the appearance of an ill-arranged pile, containing many public offices, with spacious accommodation for the Pacha, his suite, and their studs. The audience-hall, to which I as a stranger could alone gain admittance, is gaudily decorated with crimson cushions and hangings, and the richest carpets; while the ceiling and sides

are ornamented with a profusion of gilded and carved wood-work.

The Pacha's stud was very valuable: several mares were valued at 2,500 dollars each.* They were brought principally from Nesjd, and are never ridden, being kept expressly for breeding.

The mosques at Bagdat are said to exceed a hundred in number; but few of them are fine buildings, and in general they are not equal to those of Syria or Egypt. From the material of which they are constructed,—a furnace-burnt brick, of a yellowish red colour and small size,—we cannot, indeed, look for much durability in these edifices. The most ancient is Jamah el Sheikh el Gazel, which is not older than 1285 of the Christian era. Here and elsewhere such portions of the old building as remain entire are of a better order than others constructed at a later period. The space covered by a mosque forms an oblong square. The first portion is an open space surrounded by a dead wall, containing a tank, the water of which is used for the necessary ablutions before and after prayers. At the further extremity of this stands the mosque, which is usually a square building about sixty feet in height, and surmounted by

* About £500.

a dome. The latter, usually of the Persian style, is more pointed than those of Syria or Egypt: it was customary formerly to gild these over; but such practice has been of late discontinued, and they are now either painted or covered with glazed tiles of various colours. As the sunbeams glitter and play on these, they give to the edifices an air of gaiety and liveliness foreign to the general appearance of the city, which, from the level roofs of the houses and their dingy hues, otherwise exposes a general sameness and gloom.

The minarets attached to these mosques, though in general perhaps of less elevation than those of many other Eastern cities, have yet in some instances a slender, light, and graceful appearance. They are all decorated with overhanging niches, portions dropping so as to resemble stalactites, and all the other usual ornaments of Turkish and Arabian architecture. About half-way, the column commences to swell outward, until it reaches two-thirds its height; it then terminates in a small gallery appropriated to the service of the Muezzin, who from thence sends forth the Moslem's call to prayer.

The fineness, as well as adhesive quality, of the clay of the bricks with which these buildings are reared, has enabled the architect to decorate with a profusion of minute arabesque tracer-

the gates and other prominent parts of the building. The bricks are not unfrequently mixed with green, black, or otherwise variously tinted tiles. The arches are of the pointed style, bordered on either side by rich bands, finely proportioned, and sculptured marble tablets, profusely decorated with representations of flowers, vases, &c., or covered by inscriptions in the rich and flowing style of the Arabian character, are frequently carried completely round these buildings.

Within the interior of the mosque but little shew is displayed. Ostrich eggs and some rude lamps are suspended from the ceiling. Matting or a carpet cover their floors, and on the side nearest to Mecca, a small hollow recess points out the direction in which the prayers of the faithful are to be offered up. These recesses are of an oblong shape; and instead, as in pagan temples, of being filled with images or statues, they are (to denote the presence and invisibility of God) in Mahomedan churches left open and unoccupied.* Many Dervishes and other religious mendicants reside permanently within the walls, and seldom at any hour, be it night

* The sublimity of thought and extent of conception evinced in this simple act, forms an admirable comment on the attempts made by their more civilized neighbours to embody or represent that which is illimitable and incomprehensible.

or day, can the stranger pass without perceiving one or more groups of pious Mahomedans offering up their devotions.

It forms a curious distinction between the Eastern and Western churches, that while, in Europe, places of worship are almost (as in Spain) exclusively filled by the gentler sex, few, save very old females, and those not often, are seen in a Mahomedan mosque. Whatever is the cause, it cannot be referred to the disinclination of their husbands to permit their appearance in public, for they are allowed to visit each other and the baths as often as they please. It may, however, be an unwillingness to see the two sexes grouped together; a principle amidst Eastern nations which prevails very generally in every act of their social intercourse—the male and female even in their own houses eat apart. Attached to each of their mosques, and supported by voluntary contributions, there is a school, in which boys are instructed, free of expense, in reading, writing, and in a knowledge of divinity and the Koran—the only education a Moslem cares to impart to his offspring.

On the eastern side of the city stands the remains of the Takea of the Calenders. At one time the endowments of this order, protected by

the Kaliphs, were very considerable; but the Turks, with less religious scruples, have appropriated them to other and viler purposes, and the few solitary followers of the order are obliged to live on the charity of their neighbours. In the stories of Sherazade they are related to have shaven off their beards and eyebrows; but they appear to have long since abandoned that and some other ancient customs, and now wander about in the same garb and style as other Dervishes.

Some remains also still exist of the Medrassees el Mostauser, or college of the learned, built by the successor of the prophet, and so often mentioned in Arabian story.

The caravanserais of Bagdat, though very numerous, are not worthy of particular mention, as better are found in many second-rate towns in the East.

The bazaars form to me the most interesting feature in an Eastern city. Narrow streets are either arched over with brick, or a roof of grass-dried leaves and battered canvas is supported by transverse beams extending from roof to roof. During the great heats of summer the streets are nearly deserted, but at night it formed my great delight to ramble through these vaulted passages, and mix with the gay crowd which then thronged through them. Their heavy gloom during the day is scarcely

broken by the appearance of a single passenger; but at night the blaze of a hundred lights, either of lamps or torches, exchanged all into life and gaiety. It was the feast of the Ramad'han, and all were idlers, arrayed in their best apparel; their rich shawls and gorgeous-coloured garments, as they moved gaily along, served to produce a brilliant and pleasing effect.

The shops on either side are small rooms, about eight feet square, the front of which is open, and the owner seats himself, usually with a fan in his hand, on the floor, which is raised about three feet above the level of the street. Unless the arrangement is of great importance or very lengthened, it is concluded without the purchaser's leaving the street; but should it prove otherwise, he seats himself alongside the merchant, pipes and coffee are called for, and the weighty matter is discussed in all its bearings. Many an Englishman, with a feeling both of sorrow and anger, will join me in the high estimate I form of their talents for such encounters.

Perhaps the tradesmen at Bagdat are surpassed by none in the East, excepting possibly their neighbours, the Persians. No one at a glance can detect the "weak points" of a customer better. We will suppose a passer-by, (not a novice, but one who has had considerable experience in such matters,) sauntering along—

a carpet catches his eye, he approaches and becomes desirous of purchasing it. The price is demanded in a careless tone. "Sixty dollars" is the reply. "Sixty dollars!" with a start of surprise or a sneer. "You must mean ten." It is now the seller's turn to express astonishment. "Mashallah!" exclaims he, shrugging his shoulders, and elevating his eyebrows, but pausing a little—"you shall have it for fifty"—then forty—thirty—No! the would-be purchaser quits the shop, but before he has proceeded ten yards he is called back, and for twenty dollars, a third of the sum first demanded, does the carpet change owners.

The bazaars are divided into separate quarters, all who follow the same business residing mostly together in single streets. The largest, richest, and most populous is that of the El Harra, which is occupied by clothiers. Here the most costly dresses of Surat muslin, shawls from Cashmere, superbly mounted sabres of Damascus temper, matchlocks brightly polished, and the carpets from Persia, greet the eye in every direction. Nor is the shoe bazaar inferior in its costly display and variety of colouring. In nothing do the young fops of the East display their love of finery more than in the diversity of form with which they

wear their shoes and sandals. Leather of the brightest colour is always chosen. In the perfume bazaar otto forms the most costly article which is exposed for sale. I have known five guineas paid for one ounce. The most approved mode of ascertaining its quality is to drop it on a piece of paper; its strength is ascertained by the quickness with which it evaporates, and its worth by its leaving no stains on the paper. The best otto is manufactured at Constantinople.

Rose-water is very plentiful in the East: large quantities are consumed in the baths; it is also customary to sprinkle guests with it when they pay visits of ceremony. It is mostly brought from Persia in jars or bottles holding about two gallons.

The only jewellers at Bagdat are either Jews or Christians. The gold they use is of the purest kind, and in working it they display much "barbaric taste." Those who own these shops do not permanently reside in or over them. They arrive at seven in the morning, and rarely afterwards, excepting to their prayers, absent themselves during the day. It forms, when the Muezzin's call is heard, a most singular sight to observe people, when it strikes on their ears, whatever might have been their previous em-

ployments, at once relinquish them, and hurry from all parts to join in the offering up prayers to their Maker. No fears are then entertained of robbers; the merchant, to keep away the flies, merely flings a light net over his wares, and fearlessly leaves them till his return.

The baths at Bagdat are of a very inferior description. In Constantinople and Cairo they are commonly built of marble, which in these parts is scarce, and they are obliged to substitute brick and bitumen. Throughout the East many hours are passed in these places of accommodation. After quitting the bath you repose on a soft quilt, to recover from its pleasing lassitude; or, if awake, occupy yourself in a listless dreaming state, smoking and drinking coffee. But at Bagdat there are few temptations; the water is muddy, the apartments dirty, and the attendants bad. Ladies, however, I observed, sometimes passed the whole day there. A cloak is then suspended before the door, as a notification that no male visitors are to be admitted.

To the street the houses present merely a dead wall. They are usually of a quadrangular form; their windows opening into a space in the centre, which is paved, kept very clean, and ornamented with a few palms or a fountain.

There are four of these quadrangles occurring successively in the houses of the more wealthy. A small gallery and door connects them, and that farthest removed from the street is appropriated to the reception of the women of the family, and is called Harem (Sacred); the outer one, on the contrary, called Al Bab, "the Gate," forms a Divan, and is always open to visitors. Here recline the servants of the household, who rise whenever a stranger enters. The rooms round the courts are lofty, and the houses but of one story. About six feet from the ground extends a covered gallery, into which the several rooms open. But the most singular feature in these habitations is the serdaubs (cellars) which are under-ground, and from which the external atmosphere is, as far as can be, carefully excluded. In the hottest weather, when the simoon sweeps over the town from the desert, I have known Fahrenheit's thermometer to rise as high as 124°. The inhabitants, on such occasions, retreat to these recesses, which are of a refreshing coolness, the thermometer rarely exceeding 90°. Such, by comparison, is happiness! Imagine the thermometer 90° in the shade in England!

The roofs are flat, but divided by walls into different compartments, serving the inhabitants

as sleeping places during the heats of summer. All Orientals are early risers, and daylight affords a curious scene to the spectator, should he be elevated above them. The female rises first, and returns with a pipe and coffee, which the husband partakes of, and then proceeds to his ablutions and prayers. Their only bedding is a mat, fabricated from the branches of the date-palm, on which is placed a thin coverlid of cotton. It is, therefore, no difficult matter to "take up their bed and walk." When these are spread forth by the females in the evening, a porous jar of water is placed on either side.

The whole city presents a mass of narrow lanes, dirty, dark, and damp. At the base of the houses these are not more than nine feet broad; while at the top, in consequence of the projecting windows, they are almost closed. Seldom, and in many instances not at all, can the beams of the sun at any time shine below, and there the mid-day bats and owls enjoy a congenial gloom. The streets are watered morning and evening; and where the atmosphere without would be insupportable, they are at all times of a grateful coolness. The convenience of water-works here, as at Cairo and other eastern cities, is unknown, the houses being supplied by water brought from the river in skins, either on the back of men, asses, or camels. In some

of the open spaces asses stand ready bridled and saddled, for the convenience of those who require them. They are of a light colour, but streaked and spotted with red; the greatest care is taken of them; they are washed and shaved, or rather sheared, when the length of their coat requires it. Careless of human life, and almost indifferent to human suffering, this people, nevertheless, are distinguished by their humanity to animals, and the poor ass, which, by brutal treatment, in civilized England, bears the character of obstinacy and stupidity, in the Eastern cities is large and spirited. Their pace is quick and easy, and it is amusing to watch the rapidity and sagacity with which they thread the crowded streets, requiring no aid from the rider, who finds he has enough to do to look after his legs.

There is nothing more annoying in an Eastern city than the dogs; for although considered by the Turks and Arabs as an unclean animal, they are suffered to go about the streets in great numbers, and are caressed by them. As regards appearance or habits they have little in common with the dog of Europe, having long ears, a pointed nose, and more the character of the jackal. They are very fond of snapping at the heels of Europeans; whom they detect, even when dressed as other people—the natives say,

by the smell. Some middies belonging to a vessel to which I was attached gave some umbrage to the inhabitants, by measures they took to rid themselves of the annoyance they suffered from several of these animals, who used to follow their heels, barking at or biting them during the day, and had taken up their quarters at the bases (as geographers say) of their house, and by their howling prevented them from sleeping at night. The "young gentlemen" first seduced them by tempting pieces of bread, &c. beneath the windows, and then hurled huge stones down on them; but the wily curs became too wary for this after a time, and the mids sent off to the ship and procured a large fish-hook secured with wires. This they baited with fresh meat, at which the dogs eagerly snapped, and were drawn, howling and kicking, by a line to the window-sills, where one of their number acted the part of executioner, and, with a sabre, severed the head from the body. This continued for some time, and they had already rid themselves of a number of their foes, when one day they hooked an enormous brute, as large as a donkey, and being only two of them present, they were unable to move him. The howlings of the animal and an increasing crowd drew my attention to the object, and it was only by giving a few

dollars to a slave to knock the brute on the head that a disturbance was prevented. It is curious, much as they suffer from thirst, that dogs never go mad in these towns.

Towards the streets the houses have nothing inviting in their appearance. Judging erroneously from their dilapidated condition, travellers often picture the poverty and wretchedness of Eastern cities. It is with a despotic government a part of their system to avoid outward show. Within, they are not unfrequently furnished with much costliness. The walls are inlaid with mirrors, and fancifully decorated with mother-o'-pearl. The ceilings are also covered with a quantity of carved wood-work, exhibiting much taste. In the houses of the wealthy, velvet of the finest crimson covers the cushions, which are also worked in gold thread, and fringed with lace of gold or silver. Carpets of the richest pattern and manufacture cover the floors, on which the slaves move with a noiseless step. In every corner are robes of fur or sable, in which the guest is invited, in cold weather, to envelope himself.

I mixed freely with the people, and always found myself a welcome guest: a call, indeed, is considered in the light of a compliment; and if they are not engaged within their harems,

their evenings are occupied in receiving company. The most trifling amusements please them: coffee and pipes are in great request; drafts and chess are sometimes played; and dancers, or professional singers, with their guitars, are introduced. About ten o'clock, a light supper, consisting of dried fruits, almonds, and sweetmeats, is brought in; and before midnight the party generally breaks up. They not unfrequently, if there is any topic of interest, sit much later. As all classes during the heat of the day indulge in a siesta, they can afford to "steal a few hours from night."

Every person follows some occupation—either that of a tradesman, a merchant, or a situation under government: a person enjoys no consideration if not so employed; and the mere gentleman, or "man about town," is unknown.

Abroad, the native of Bagdat appears inactive and listless; no one walks for exercise, and they lounge along, with their pipe in one hand and their rosary in the other. So indispensable is the former, that one of the hands of an artisan at work is frequently thus employed. At home, no class of men in reality enjoy themselves more. Within their harems they openly acknowledge that they indulge in the forbidden pleasure of wine, or devote themselves to other

debaucheries. The seed of the male hemp, with opium, forms one of their natural inebriants.

In conversation they are lively and entertaining; no one is fonder of a jest, or can better understand and enjoy a quiet joke. In their disposition they are hospitable and generous, free from any spirit of intolerance, and showing all the negative virtues of other Orientals. They are passionately attached to their children.

While conceding my testimony to such good qualities, I cannot exempt them from the charge of lying and deceit; qualities which may, however, be said to have almost entirely originated from, and been inseparable with, the government; wherever wealth is obtained, concealment being absolutely necessary.

In their dress, the higher orders wear a costly robe of flowing silk, usually of scarlet, purple, or other bright colour; it is open at the sleeves and down the front, but a Cashmere shawl confines it to the waist: over this is thrown a cloak of broad-cloth. White muslin of the finest texture forms their turban, which is perhaps, in its form, the most graceful of any worn in the East. Loose drawers, and socks of bright yellow leather, cover their lower man. A dagger, the haft of which is highly ornamented, completes the costume. The poorer classes wear merely a shirt confined by a lea-

thern girdle, and are *sans-culottes;* but their turban is also of clear white muslin.

Baths, to those who are mourning the death of their relatives, are forbidden in the East. Lady Montague's description, as applied to females, of these luxurious and even necessary comforts, is, I have reason to believe, very correct: they are frequently taken medicinally; and though both hot and cold baths are in use, yet, for ordinary ablutions, cold water is always preferred. The use of aromatics, on this and other occasions, may be dated from the remotest antiquity; and they still sprinkle their guests with rose-water, and perfume them with aloe woods.

Few women of condition, on ordinary occasions, unless when going to the baths, appear in the streets; but when they do they are mounted on asses, and their person so completely enveloped, that no glimpse can be obtained of them. Their face is partially concealed, either by a thin veil of white muslin or one of horse-hair, having two apertures, through which their dark and sparkling eyes alone are visible. They still practise the custom of staining their eyelids and brows with a moistened powder of a black colour, which is alluded to in 2 Kings, ix. 30, where Jezebel is described

as "painting her face," or more correctly in the Hebrew version, "painting her eyes." Antimony, the lamp-black of frankincense or almonds, and several other substances, are used for this purpose. It is thought that, by the external addition of a circular black ring, the lustre of the eyes is increased, and that it is even beneficial to the sight. The powder is usually kept in a small circular box of wood, and is applied with a bodkin of the same material.

With the lower classes, if unmarried, the chemise is of a red colour; if married, it is of blue. Like Rebecca, their females, who are often exceedingly beautiful, may still be seen in groups, with pitchers on their heads, fetching water from the river. Tall in stature, their limbs when young are rounded, and their figure good: they then walk upright, and with much ease and gracefulness; but when they get aged they stoop nearly double, and are hideous-looking objects.

At the period of which I am writing, the population of Bagdat, comprising the resident inhabitants, was estimated at 120,000 souls. Of these, two-thirds were a mixed race of Persians, Turks, and Arabs, the rest were Jews and Christians; the greater part of the former belong to the Sunnee sect. A number of Sheahs are

also attracted here by its proximity to Kerbela; which, besides being the spot rendered sacred by the death of Ali, retains also a further degree of sanctity from the circumstance of its being the burial-place of the eleventh Imaum. To die at Kerbela, and to be buried near Meshed Ali, is the fondest wish of the Sheah pilgrim. Many a poor wretch has dragged his weary limbs for a thousand miles to accomplish this; and several hundred dead bodies are annually carried through this city for interment there. A heavy tax is levied upon them by the Turks, who, but for that, would not, I am confident, tolerate such a nuisance. To this moment I have not recovered from the disgust I experienced on a journey of 100 miles, which I was compelled to take with a cafila burdened with dead bodies; many of them were in an advanced state of decomposition, merely wrapped in coverlids and deposited in rude cases. In such a climate, the imagination of the reader will picture the rest.

The Armenians form the most considerable portion of the Christian population. They are a thrifty and wealthy race, and both their persons and property, unless in very disturbed times, are respected. They are mostly employed in financial matters, in which the Turks are by no

means proficient, and they not unfrequently rise to the highest offices of the state. They have here a bishop and a small church. Under the general appellation of Kuldee, Bagdat also contains two other sects of Christians, the Socobites and Nestorians; the latter sect was established by their chief, whose name they bear, and whose opinions were condemned by the Council of Ephesus. They believe in the two natures of Christ, and permit their priests to marry. Near Monsul and in Kurdistan, this people are very numerous, possessing several monasteries. They maintain a communication with those of the same persuasion in other parts of the East; in their churches they use a Syrian version of the scriptures. Here there were also some Sabeans, or Christians of St. John. The precise faith of this people is not known. Here they profess Mahomedanism.

There are about 7,000 Jews in Bagdat. Of this scattered race which I have in different parts of the world fell in with, these men retain in the greatest degree those striking peculiarities of person and character ascribed to them in the Bible. They state themselves to be a portion of the ten tribes, who, under an impression that their temple was not to be rebuilt, refused to return to Jerusalem when

Cyrus issued his mandate for them to do so. But this is denied by others, who maintain that they are a portion of those who were carried away in the first captivity, and planted in the cities of Medea. The Jews in Bagdat, upon the whole, are not viewed more unfavourably by the Mahomedans than they are by many Christians in London, neither is their general condition relatively worse. They reside in a separate quarter of the town, under the government of a patriarch, who is responsible to the pacha for their conduct; and as they take a part in state affairs, they rise to high offices, and even obtain a seat in the Divan. I know nothing which so much interests us in the history of this everywhere scattered and shrinking race, than the strong bond of union which cements them. Here there are no Jewish beggars. If one of their class fall into distress, another more wealthy relieves him. In their intercourse, or speaking of each other, they use the terms brothers, or countrymen.

The government of Bagdat for several centuries has been completely in the hands of the Mamelukes. Although receiving his appointment nominally from the Grand Seignior, the pacha was always selected by the Mamelukes and the people from one of their own number.

A Divan sits every Friday, consisting of the heads of the department, to deliberate on affairs of general moment; but all in the several offices conduct the details without the interference of this body.

The commerce of Bagdat consists of two branches—that of India on the one hand, and Persia on the other. That of the former has of late years been on the increase; the latter has declined, owing principally to the commerce which was formerly carried on here finding its way direct, by the route of Erzeroom, to Constantinople. Sugar, muslin, coarse and fine cloths, &c. are mostly received from India, and distributed through Syria, and over Kurdistan and Asia Minor.

The boats in which this traffic is carried on between Bagdat and Busrah are generally from 100 to 200 tons, and, with the exception of being lower in the water, are very similar to those employed in the Persian Gulf. They have immense beam, very short masts with latteen sails, drawing from five to six feet water, and only ply seven months in the year. In general, they start from Busrah in the first week of December, and are then, as north-westerly winds prevail, tracked against the stream the whole way, and the voyage occupies

them about a month. Smaller boats are tracked the same distance, 420 miles, in ten days. The trackers are a strong hardy race of men, called Mellahs. Their usual wages for the whole journey is fifteen piastres—not quite one dollar; a small recompense for their laborious employment, of tugging, during the greater portion of twenty-four hours, against a stream running five or six miles an hour. With the exception of a brief period for their noon and even prayers, they work from sun-rise to sun-set. At night the boat is made fast to a bank. The cargoes brought by the larger vessels consist of the riches of India or China. The returns made at Busrah are, galls, copper, raw silks, and salt from the desert. The smaller vessels are rudely constructed of indifferent planks, caulked over with bitumen. They seldom attempt the voyage singly, but proceed in parties of ten or fifteen, in order to avoid the exactions of every petty sheikh; but regular customs, besides presents, are paid to the Beni, Lam, Montafiges, and other powerful tribes, amounting in the larger boats to thirty dollars the voyage.

CHAPTER XV.

Plague approaches Bagdat — Apathy — Sudden Alarm—Great Mortality — Robber Hordes — Mustapha's Wife murdered — Deaths of Nawaub and all his Household—Fearful Scene—City Flooded—Abdullah's Wife's Parting Scene—Quit Bagdat.

In April 1831, the plague, after lurking for some time around the southern shores of the Euxine, now ravaged Mesopotamia, and gradually approached Bagdat. It stalked its awful march of death from village to village, withering, like the lava flood, all life that came under its baleful flow. Daily we heard of its approach, yet heard it but in whispers and with listless apathy. In vain our envoy entreated the pacha to establish a quarantine, or adopt other precautionary measures. Such, he contented himself with replying, was against the letter as well as the spirit of the Koran, and would be more likely to attract than to avert the coming evil.

It may be observed, that the disease first broke out in the Jews' quarter,— most probably from their dealing in articles of apparel. There, in one house, five persons died suddenly; and though it

quickly extended to those adjoining, still the government and population were unmoved. The former did their best to stifle and contradict the rumours of these deaths, but no more; and, beyond the funerals, which soon became very numerous, and the constant wail of women for the departed, there was nothing to remind a stranger that aught of unusual importance was passing around him: the bazars received their usual supplies, coffee-houses were frequented by loungers, and people continued to pursue their usual avocations.

But this could not last long; a feeling of alarm suddenly arose, and appeared quite as unaccountable and extraordinary as their former apathetic indifference. They now stared, as if awakening from a fearful dream. They must fly—but whither? To the desert? The Bedowin was lurking at every avenue, to rob and spoil those who, with their valuables, attempted to quit the city. By the river? Every boat was crowded, and the disease followed them in their flight. The more pious and zealous, in obedience to their belief of the immutable laws of predestination, remained, with Moslem apathy, to await the worst. Not so the Resident, the Armenians, and other Christians; they, on the contrary, adopted every precaution to stay the progress of the

pestilence: each house laid in a store of provisions; doors were closed, windows barred and secured, and the alternative given to those who chose to share their imprisonment or go forth.

To obtain the necessaries of life was all the communication they now held with their neighbours; and these were first soaked in water, and then hoisted up into the house by a rope. Yet all their precautions did not in every instance prove successful. It was afterwards found impossible to prevent the servants from stealing out to visit their sick or dying relations, and in several instances they communicated the pestilence to their several inmates. Thus it happened with the Resident's party, who, after losing two or three of their number, shifted their quarters to Busrah, where their precautionary measures were attended with better success.

As yet I had adopted no unusual measures myself, but went about as before. The plague at last reached that part of the town where I resided. The house in which I lived was higher than those surrounding it, and a melancholy opportunity was thus afforded me of watching the rapidity of its course. Gradually was the number of those thinned who with their beds at first thronged the roofs: in one house, the inhabitants were reduced, in three weeks,

from twenty-five to six only; and they suddenly disappeared, whether by disease or flight I knew not.

The plague had now reached its height; all distinctions of society, friends or relations, had in a great measure ceased: the finger of God seemed pointed to this devoted city. "Above us," said an old Moolah to me, pointing upwards, as I stood talking to him at the door of a mosque, "red pestilence wings her owl-like flight, and universal desolation below follows her course." A thousand died a day; the seats of justice were unoccupied; the wailing for the dead, which before had incessantly filled the air, was now hushed to a silence and calm more frightful; the dead lay unburied in every avenue. Then arose a number of ruffians, who, with a courage growing out of their fearful position, formed themselves into bands, under leaders more demoniac than themselves, and swept the streets. On one occasion, I passed a group who had collected in a low apartment, and were whetting and lashing themselves into a state which should fit them for further outrages: a wretched hag, her form bent almost double, was supplying them with a fiery spirit, and lumps of half-grilled meat; a few of their number, overpowered by the former, were lying

senseless on the floor; others, cursing and howling like half-famished wolves, were, with utter disregard to the safety of their companions, brandishing about their daggers and sabres, or firing their matchlocks against the roof of the apartment. But amidst the clamour, the fumes, the din, and confusion of this pandemonium, the greater number sat silent at the board, their eyes gleaming into a maniac's wildness and ferocity, quaffing the spirits in almost incredible quantities, yet waiting their effect in producing a fit state of excitement for them again to sally forth. It was a fearful sight; and the varied scenes of horror which it has been my lot to witness in after-life have not effaced from my recollection the impression it received from the momentary glance thus obtained; and while the hand, distant as the time now is, is penning these lines, I can scarcely recur to the incident without a shudder.

The bands went from house to house, plundering, and, wherever it was deemed necessary, destroying their inmates. The work of death, but half done by disease, was often completed by these men.

Some months after the period now alluded to, Mustapha Aga, a personal friend of mine, related their visit to his dwelling. Smitten by

plague, he was stretched on a pallet spread on the floor of his apartment; two of his private household laid corpses a short distance from him. His wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, was attending him, his head placed in her lap. A violent noise arose below; the door was heavily assailed, it yielded, a sharp conflict took place, shouting and a rushing on the staircase were heard, and the robbers were in the apartment. "I read their purpose," said the Aga to me, "in their looks; but I was stricken, and could not lift a finger to save her for whose life I would gladly have forfeited my own. A savage ruffian approached her; entreaties for life were unavailing; yet for an instant her extreme beauty arrested his arm, but it was only for an instant; his dagger again gleamed on high, and she sank a bleeding victim beside me.—Cold, and apparently inanimate as I was, I nevertheless felt her warm blood flowing past me, as with her life it rapidly ebbed away. My eyes must have been fixed with the vacant look of death: I even felt unmoved,—as he bent down beside me, and with spider-like fingers stripped the jewels from my hand,—the touch of that villain who had deprived me of all which in life I valued.

"The figures of his companions, who were

busy rifling the apartment, appeared to my dizzy brain to dilate, and assume, as they mingled and whirled together, a thousand hideous forms. Their eyes appeared to glare upon me as they pointed, with fiend-like gestures and horrid laughter, to the bleeding innocent beside me. At length a happy insensibility stole over me. How long I remained in this condition I know not; but when I recovered my senses fever had left me, cool blood again traversed my veins. Beside me was a faithful slave, who was engaged bathing my temples. He had escaped the slaughter of his brethren, by secreting himself while the murderers remained in the house. I recovered, nor did the slave suffer for his generosity."

There resided here an Indian nawaub, a pensioner of the British Government. The plague appeared in his household; several fell victims; and he embarked with the survivors in a boat for Busrah. Ten miles below the city his boat grounded, and they were unable to move her. One by one its occupants were then launched into the river, until, of forty souls who had embarked, the nawaub and a single slave were the only survivors. They returned to the shore, and were both carried off. A year afterwards I walked over his house; its costly furniture,

its forty inmates, all had disappeared; for the walls had fallen in, and a footpath led over them. I witnessed, during the panic, many instances of generous self-devotion to the afflictions of others; and many were related to me afterwards.

An Italian, who had heard that his friend and countryman was lying sick of this malady at the gate of the city, went forth in search of him. He found him unable to move, and in a piteous state. Placing him on his back, he carried him to his own house; his own wife and children also resided there, but established a strict quarantine; he and his friend lived together until the latter completely recovered, and not another member of the household suffered from their master's generosity.

A similar instance occurred, where the wife of an English missionary, who had resided here for some months, was attacked. Her husband's attention was unremitting: all, save he, had fled; but she gradually wasted away, and died in his arms. Providence extends its protection over similar instances of devotion, and the bereft husband, who in the midst of his affliction cared not for life, was spared for a future period, and then, when he was rearing his family, he blessed the hand which had chastened, and yet spared him.

I could not but remark that the number of those who were, during the visit of the plague, taken sick in cloudy or rainy weather, was sure to double the number of those attacked when the weather was fine; and the disease in this case paid no respect to persons or time—the young, the old, the gay, the grave, the sickly, and the healthy, were alike cut off.

Sailors, when all hope of safety has fled, will call for drink, and intoxicate themselves. How wildly strange to watch the effects of danger of another kind, perhaps more fearful, because more slow in its approach. Of the people by which I was now surrounded, some, indeed,—as the robbers I have alluded to,—took to drinking; others to praying; many, to make the most of their time, launched into every excess. All moral feeling appeared extinguished. The avenger stalked abroad, openly sought his victims, and consummated the meditated vengeance perhaps of years. Every evil passion which attends human nature burst forth unrestrained. How slight in appearance, yet how strong in reality, must that mental armour be, which in social intercourse binds such feelings within us; for here, amidst such scenes as these, (enough, one might suppose, to freeze the blood, or divest it of the ordinary impulse of our

nature) all restraint was removed, and the passions stalked forth in all their hideous deformity. A sacked town must offer harrowing scenes; but Bagdat, during the plague, presented many equally bad. But let us neither dwell on, nor lift the veil further; he is the happier individual who is content to look on the better side, and forget the evil portions of the picture.

Affairs were in this state on the 12th of April, when the river began to rise. For a few days previous to this we had had much rain and dark cloudy weather; the streets, which are not paved, became filled with mud, so as to be nearly impassable. On the night of the 20th, the river, which had rapidly filled its bed, in one dreadful rush burst its banks, and overwhelmed the greater part of the city; 15,000 people were summarily hurried into eternity; several were plague patients, others children, or people infirm from age. There were many who had survived those best beloved, and awaited their fate in silence, making scarcely an effort to escape.

It was not till after the first burst of water had subsided that the greater number of the houses fell; the foundations not being loosened until several hours afterwards. I was sleeping at the top of the house when the flood burst upon us,

and was awakened by the roar of the waters rushing past the hall. I remained perfectly quiet, convinced no human exertion could avail me. No outcry accompanied the convulsions; I heard no shriek nor wail; but, as I seated myself on the upper part of the wall, I could perceive several bodies, their white dresses gleaming amidst the turbid waters, silently sweeping by.

Towards the morning the flood gradually became less rapid and deep; and at sunrise, finding that it was not a greater stream than I could wade through, I let myself down by a rope into the street. Hardly had my feet touched the ground, when, with a mighty crash, down came the house. A lucky escape! thought I, as I made my way over to the opposite side, and seated myself on the stone steps of a mosque. How strangely constituted are our minds! I had never, on any previous occasion, dreamt of danger; I mingled indifferently in all society without fear, without precaution. How long I might have continued to do so, is a question which I will not put to my memory; but my recent escape, acting probably with suddenness on a mind excited by previous events, created for a time an almost nervous feeling of danger and alarm, and I determined to adopt, without delay, every measure in my

power for quitting Bagdat. There was a Bedowin Sheikh, with whom I had some slight acquaintance, who was residing with his countrymen in a hut just without the walls of the city: to his dwelling I now directed my course. My acquaintance with Bedowin habits, and friendship with some of his tribe, here served me in good need. I had, on some occa sion, performed a trifling service for them, and their chief no sooner heard my wish than he expressed his willingness to conduct me across the Great Syrian Desert to Damascus, where the plague had not yet appeared. I took up my abode with him; but the ravages of the disease without, was fully equal to that within, the city. Daily some of our camel-drivers sickened and died: thus our departure was delayed from day to day, and as I had but a small sum, and a much larger one was hourly offered, I had but the word of the Sheikh to depend on.

Abdallah had been lately married to a young and beautiful girl, and one child had blessed their union. Seldom in any country have I beheld a more lovely or finer form than that of Zuleima. Of a figure the tallest that is consistent with feminine beauty, her shape and gait were light and elegant; her complexion, not darker than would be deemed fair in Italy, though natu-

rally pale, was nevertheless clear and lustrous; her hair hung in raven locks as low as her waist. Her features were slightly aqueline, her lips rich, red, and full, and her teeth of a pearly whiteness. With all the imprudence and unreservedness of innocence, she would frequently bring her infant to me to caress. Her face was never concealed, and at our meals she always attended upon us.

Poor Zuleima! as the hour of our departure drew near, her firm and elastic gait changed to a pace mournful and slow. The pangs of separation were already before her; she knew the countless risks that were against their meeting again. An Arab maiden, she would have flown to the desert with pleasure—but her infant. The perils of her husband's journey were but trifling compared with those which hourly beset it and him; and with this view methought she was more than usually solicitous to hasten our departure.

Upon the morning we were to begin our journey I strolled forth to take a last look at the desolate city. Its busy streets were now deserted; occasionally a solitary passenger hurried along, with a small bag of perfume held up to his nose. An ass laden with naked dead bodies, and driven by a boy, passed me on its way to the town ditch, a general grave in which all

those who died of the pestilence were deposited. I sickened at the sight, and hastened to join Abdallah. I arrived in time to witness the parting scene between him and his beauteous wife. She had clung imploringly, despairingly, to his feet; in vain her brother strove to remove her; she fainted, and as her arms relaxed their hold she was borne senseless away. I thought Abdallah's heart would have burst. He cast one look upon that form, dashed to the side a few scalding tears that rolled down his manly cheeks, and hurried with hasty steps from the scene.

My obligations to Abdallah in our subsequent perilous journey were very many. I had reason to love him, but I hasten to the sequel of his story.

After twenty days' travelling through the desert, he remained but twenty-four hours at Damascus, and then hurried back to share the fortunes of his bride. He arrived in safety, sought her dwelling, and found that both herself and her sweet infant were dead!

Twelve months after my first visit I saw him, and when he related the above event to me, he calmly observed, that what God "ordered" (literally) must take place; that he had merely taken that which He had given, and that the mortal bowed with resignation to His will.

Nevertheless, poor Abdallah looked miserably ill, and it was evident death had fixed its mark upon him. About a week after my arrival I again called to see him: "He is gone," said his brother, whom I met at the door. A broken heart, rather than disease, killed him. He was laid beside his wife and child, in the last but calmest spot of earthly repose.

I pass over a variety of adventures, following the events to which the preceding pages refer, to revisit, on the next year, the city of Bagdat. The plague still raged there; and what a change had that brief period brought about! After I had quitted the city on the former occasion, the waters gradually subsided, but left many stagnant pools, the nuisance of which combining with the effluvia arising from the bodies cast into the town ditch, produced a fever, almost as deadly in its effects, when the hot weather set in and the plague had ceased, as the latter disease itself.

Famine succeeded; but still the vials of wrath had not been all emptied on this devoted city. The Sultan's army on the northern frontier had been calmly watching the progress of the disorder, and shortly after it had ceased they invested the city. For several days the Mamelukes bravely defended it, and then they were compelled by starvation to surrender. They were all

slaughtered, and the city given up to pillage. More than two-thirds of the town was now therefore in ruins, and from such complicated disasters the population had dwindled from 150,000 to 20,000 souls.

I made my way in comparative solitude, driving my horse before me, for he was too much exhausted for me to remount and ride. I had no money, and could not moreover find fodder to sustain him; so I was reluctantly compelled to part with him for five dollars to a Bedowin. Very much did I regret the necessity of parting with an animal which had carried me nearly 3,000 miles.

Of the scanty population 500 continued to die daily. The residency was still held here; but a strict quarantine forbad my gaining admittance there, and I put up for the night in a stable near it. An old gardener was the only person I met there, and he was bemoaning his father and two sons. I was not aware of this second visit of the plague; but having got into the city, and having no friends, I could not again quit it. I therefore took up my lodgings in an old khan, where I lived economically retired as my income compelled me to do.

When all symptoms of the raging pestilence had disappeared, and the waters of the river,

which made a second visit to the city, had again subsided to their former level, I quitted my dwelling, to seek, as I strolled forth amidst the now desolate city, such of my friends as pestilence and the flood had spared. Alas! how small the number to receive my greeting! whole streets were depopulated by the one calamity, and overthrown by the other. I entered several of the dwellings which yet remained standing. What varied, what hideous scenes presented themselves to me! In some, the reputed wealth of their former possessors had attracted the robber hordes to which I have before alluded, and all of value had been carried off. Severe struggles had taken place, between the invaders and the possessors, for that which perhaps in but a few brief hours would probably be less than dross to either.

Just within the entrance hall of a Georgian merchant with whom I was acquainted, there lay the bodies of a slave and one of these robbers. In the left hand of the latter was a rich kalean. The slave, in intercepting his progress, had been shot through the body, but had afterwards, it would appear, retained sufficient energy to plunge his dagger into the heart of his opponent. They had both fallen together, and must have expired at nearly at the same time, for they

lay side by side—the countenance of the robber turned upwards and hideously distorted, that of the slave placid and mild, although his right hand still retained its hold of the home-stricken dagger.

I traversed my way through those apartments that had escaped the spoiler. I wound through halls and along passages which had formerly resounded with the busy din of human voices and human feet; now how changed the scene! no sounds follow the ear but the almost noiseless echo of my steps. Silent now and deserted was that banquet-hall; more melancholy still the reflection that it was not again doomed to be filled by those guests who had taken their departure but yesterday night, to return with renewed zeal on the morrow. They had retired to partake their last repose.

The bright and brilliant hue of costly divans was now dimmed by the accumulated dust of months. A few chebouques, their bowls partially filled, were reclining against the cushions; beside them were left the half-finished coffee-cups, with their fillagree covering of gold; and the fancy could not but picture the host, on the first symptom of the malady, rising suddenly and staggering to his couch, from whence death alone was again to summon him.

There was an Armenian merchant with whom I was acquainted, who had the good fortune to possess a daughter, the most lovely being I had ever cast eyes upon. She was rather above than below the middle height; but her form was of such exquisite proportion, that her superior height was not perceived until she stood by the side of others. Her hands and feet were extremely small; her neck long and tapering. When intelligence of the plague first reached Bagdat I had seen her stand over her younger sister, to whom she was passionately attached, and with arms folded over her breast, her eyes cast upwards, and flashing through their yet darkened fringes, as she fervently invoked Heaven's blessing and protection on her, and then thought I had never beheld a countenance more truly or justly entitled to be called heavenly.

Some months had elapsed after our first acquaintance, before I was made aware that Miriam was but awaiting the return of a young countryman from Aleppo, to be united to him; and preparations were in progress for that event, when plague for the present put a stop to all. The family established a quarantine; and I had since heard no more of them.

The gate, as I now approached the house, was closed; I struck my staff against it several times,

without attracting attention, and with a conclusion that its inmates had shared the fate of but too many others. I was turning away with a sigh, when the wicket slowly opened, and the feeble voice of the old merchant bade me enter. I grasped him by the hand; he spoke not; but beckoning me to follow him, slowly tottered up the stairs. I looked around—he was alone. "Your daughter Miriam?" said I, in a faltering voice. The spell was broken—the old man threw himself on a chair and gave vent to a flood of tears: as these chased each other down his venerable beard, he sobbed so piteously, that I was fearful it would put an end at once to him and his sorrow. What a mockery it would have been to have offered words in consolation! I remained gazing on him in silence. To my great relief, he at length calmed himself in a measure, and in broken sentences conjured me to forgive a father's weakness. "You," said he, "oh! Frank, are the first person I have seen, except those who for months were immured within these baleful walls. But I am unequal to the task of talking now."

He clapped his hands, and a slave appeared, who seemed scarcely less astonished at my presence than was his master. The old man sent him for pipes and coffee; and after we had

again seated ourselves, I gained from him the particulars of the following affecting incident.

"For three weeks," said he, "by adopting the most rigid precautions, we succeeded in shutting out the pestilence, although the neighbourhood around resounded with the groans and shrieks of those who were suffering themselves, or wept the fate of others. One morning, however, I went into Ammina's (the sister of Miriam) room, and found that some animal had reposed the previous evening on her bed. Fully aware that it is but too often that disease is by such means communicated, I nevertheless said nothing. Some days elapsed, and already had I cherished hopes that my fears were groundless, when one morning too fully convinced me that the poor child was infected. She complained of a cold shivering, which was, as she retired to her pallet, followed by a burning heat and intense pain about the pit of the stomach, while dimness and lustre were strangely combined in her full but fixed eye.

"The malady could not for an instant be concealed from the anxious eye of Miriam; and despite the prayers and entreaties of her father and friends, the heavenly girl tore herself from their arms, and rushed to the chamber of her beloved sister. There, by the side of the poor

little sufferer, sat Miriam, watching her every look—now moistening her parched lips, bathing her pallid but burning brow, dressing the loathsome ulcers, or quietly striving to soothe the ravings of delirium. She neither ate, drank, nor slept; she breathed the same breath with her, and lived but for her sister; and when, after five days and five nights of intense watching, the pure and gentle spirit of the sufferer fled, Miriam uttered no shriek—manifested no outward shew of emotion; but slowly and calmly performed the last sad offices. Rising then from her solitary task, she gazed on those wan and pallid features she was about to behold no more, threw her whole soul into glance, and waving aside those who at the door of the apartment had in much wonder watched her every action, she quitted the room. Entering her own chamber, she threw herself on the couch and buried her face in the pillow; but there followed no sobs or tears—only at first a gentle shivering, and then violent convulsions. It was now her lover's turn to betray his self-devotion. His voice, it was evident, soothed her; and, after remaining some hours by her side, he was happy to perceive that first a drowsiness, and then a happy insensibility, stole over her. Exhausted by long watching, she slept soundly,

and awoke with the usual fever, but in perfect possession of her senses. Her lover held her hands within his own: looking at him fixedly and tenderly, 'Leave me, my beloved,' said she, 'ere yet it be too late, for already I feel the burning poison traversing my veins—no human aid can avail me; but fly thou, dearest, farewell!'

"But let me not dwell on the details of a disorder the most terrible to which poor human nature is subjected; its torments of pains, thirst, and heat—its coldness, vomiting, and utter prostration of spirit—its pestilential ulcers. Suffice it that, where she, who 'had walked in beauty like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies,' there now she lay prostrate, her body covered with spots black and livid.

"For many hours she had been totally insensible to all that was passing; and all around, save her lover, had despaired of her recovery. 'Let us trust in God,' said he: and his piety was rewarded. One morning, as he had pressed her forehead, he felt a slight moisture—a quick perspiration followed—the crisis of the disorder was past, her reason returned, and in a few days she was perfectly restored to health."

The pair were united before I quitted Bagdat, and very many pleasant hours did I spend in their society.

CHAPTER XVI.

Quit Bagdat—Mosque of Casmeen.

On the 3d of April 1833, we at length succeeded in quitting Bagdat. The desert extends to its very walls, and its wasted appearance was alone broken by the glistening of the white tombs of an extensive cemetery. Here a few scattered groups, unwilling to return to the baleful scenes the city presented, were lingering over the remains of those smitten by the pestilence; with the reflection, perhaps, that themselves, or one yet more dear to them, might be the next who followed. How mournfully they gazed on those last sad and sickening remains of mortality!

Skirting this now ghastly abode of the departed, we followed the western bank of the river, and, at the distance of three miles from the city, passed, on the left, the mosque of the Casmeen, erected over the remains of the eleventh of the twelve Imaums ac-

knowledged by the Sheahs. This is, perhaps, the handsomest sepulchral structure in Mesopotamia, and is yet untouched by time. A dome of light and graceful proportions rises over the centre, its gilded surface glittering in the sunbeams. At either angle a tall and graceful minaret rears itself: lofty palms wave in the breeze before them, their dark green foliage contrasting in a remarkable manner with the purple tint of the tiles with which these edifices are faced.

A few yards from this we approached the banks of the Tigris, and filled our water-skins from its muddy stream. A verdant bank slopes down to its margin. The sun had passed the meridian; all was sultry and still. Unmoved by human woe, nature changes not its smiling garb; and the dark waters of the river hold their silent course towards the stricken city, with the same equal, tranquil flow as when in all its pride and splendour. Its minarets and domes, which stand out from the clear blue ground of heaven, now reminded us only of the sepulchre—all whiteness without, but corruption and rottenness within. Abdallah dismounted to his prayers: is it impugning the sincerity of his devotions to ask in what direction they were offered?

But let us turn from the contemplation of such scenes. Before us was the great Syrian desert;

five hundred miles lay between us and Damascus, the point to which our steps were to be now directed. Our caravan consisted but of four camels. Myself, Elliot, and Abdallah, were each mounted on one; while the fourth was laden with rice, and two water-skins, holding perhaps thirty gallons. This was to prove our only supply until we reached the Euphrates. Our garb was indifferent: the smart attire which Abdallah had worn in the city was exchanged for a tattered raiment; neither Elliot nor myself wore much better; and our sole articles of furniture were a cooking-pot and a coffee-pot—our only provisions a small skin filled with dates.

Continuing in a north-westerly direction until ten, we found ourselves in a hollow marshy tract, which had been filled by the late rains, and now extended hence to the walls of Bagdat. Much to our discomfort, showers again commenced to fall heavily; peals of thunder rolled above us, while the lightning, in one continued blaze of light, flashed over the face of the waters beneath. Our camels were alarmed; in vain we tried by coaxing to urge them on; at length they laid down and refused again to rise. The rain now descended in torrents; the water was a foot deep; to sleep was therefore impossible,

and we passed the night in our saddles, solacing ourselves with an occasional pipe of tobacco. Most happy was I when the day dawned. We then started with a bright sun above us, but the whole of the country was flooded. Towards noon we got clear of this swampy tract, and entered on an extensive sand-down, covered in each hollow or valley with a scanty sprinkling of grass, which the late rains had caused to spring forth, but which the first hot wind would wither and destroy.

Shortly after noon, making seventeen hours from Bagdat, we arrived on the borders of the Bahr el Mil, or Salt Sea. Here the camel on which my poor friend Abdallah was mounted lost its footing, and fell with great violence. The rider's arm was broken; but the gallant fellow, after sitting some time to recover from the first acuteness of the pain, remounted the animal, and, without a murmur escaping his lips, continued his journey. Our route, now skirting the lake, took a more southerly direction than before. A few scattered tufts of tamarisk bushes shewed themselves.

We occasionally obtained a glimpse of the encampments of the Jerboa tribe, who were then at war with the Agil, to which Abdallah belonged. It was, therefore, necessary to avoid

them; for had we been discovered, certain plunder would have been our lot. One of our camels (the led one) now became very restive; it was impossible to prevent its rolling on the ground. In one of these freaks our solitary cooking-pot was squeezed into the shape of a cocked-hat; in another, he burst one of our water-skins. It was therefore necessary to remove the remaining skin and the baggage to the quieter camel on which I was mounted, while my seat was transferred to the refractory animal.

We were doomed in the evening to feel the loss of our cooking-pot; for our usual custom had been to boil the rice before starting, and to eat it when we halted. Now we had to wander some time before a nook sufficiently concealed could be found to enable us, without fear of discovery, to light a fire.

The following morning we approached the banks of the Euphrates. The country here is more broken and hilly than that which borders the Tigris. From the summit of a small mound we first discovered the waters of the river, holding their noiseless course—a golden thread through an emerald web—clumps of palms, of tamarisks, and of poplars, fringing the margin. At length we reached its bank, and our course then con-

tinued over ground which had been formerly extensively cultivated; mounds of ancient embankments met the eye in every direction, but all was now deserted.

We advanced to within four miles of the town of Hit, and our camels, which had been restive all day, were now actuated by some new impulse, and grew furious. The one on which I was mounted set the example of scampering off at full gallop. Previous to this we had tied their legs, but to no purpose; they soon broke the cords. For some time I held the lead; in vain I tugged with might and main, it only increased the speed. Away we went over rocks and hollows, and down steep declivities. Not relishing a continuance of this steeple-chase, I looked out for a smooth spot to deposit my carcase; and this I at length effected, without any more serious injury than a few bruises. It is bad enough to have a horse run away with you, but defend me, when so situated, from the motion of a camel; he bounds in awkward and ungainly leaps, and it requires all the skill of a veteran rider to maintain his seat.

Elliot had previously dismounted, but was unable to prevent his beast from imitating the example of mine. Abdallah, who rode on a small black camel, was more fortunate, for its

legs were too securely fastened; and while Elliot held him, Abdallah, with his one arm, managed yet more effectually to manacle the brute; but in a few moments a range of hills hid the fugitives from our sight, and it then became necessary to unloose Abdallah's camel and let him follow them. In the course of a few minutes he rushed away, foaming at the mouth, and roaring with impatience to join his companions. There was nothing left forElliot and myself but to mount on the summit of a neighbouring hill, and watch our guide's return; but darkness crept over us, and there were no signs of that. Without any thing to relieve our hunger or thirst, we nevertheless huddled beneath a rock, and slept soundly through the night.

On the following morning, directing our steps to some cultivated ground, we found a group of peasants, who testified as much surprise at our approach as if we had fallen from the clouds. Let not this, however, surprise the reader. The day before being exceedingly sultry, we had doffed our superfluous garments and suspended them on our camels: Elliot was literally *sans-culottes*, and I not much better nor more fully clad. A few dates steeped in water, and some onions plucked fresh from the ground, formed, half-famished as we were,

a most grateful and refreshing meal. Our hospitable entertainers viewed the eagerness with which we devoured whatever was placed before us with wondering eyes, and for some time we had neither time nor inclination to relieve their curiosity, by acquainting them with the mishap which had brought us to our present condition.

Mounted upon our small black camel, an Arab now approached us, and we learned from him that Abdallah had been unsuccessful in his search after its stray companions. As we followed the steps of our guide to the town, the animal he rode was still very restive, and we were at length compelled to slit his nostrils, and pass a cord through the cartilage. In this manner we succeeded in reaching Hit.

My guide informed me, that at this season the camels were mejnoun (mad), and that the paroxysm had in all probability been brought on sooner than usual, by the change from the desert to the cultivated ground. It was fortunate they did not give us equal trouble in the desert; but whenever we approached an hostile encampment, with a sagacity peculiar to this animal, a sign was sufficient to enable them to comprehend the wishes of their masters, and they crouched down and silently stretched their long necks over the surface of the sand.

We reached the ford opposite the town, and were ferried over in a rude boat formed of the date-tree coated with bitumen. A single oar, the rude branch of a tree, was all we had to propel us. On these frail contrivances is wafted across the waters of the river the whole of the Syrian caravan, its three thousand camels, and their costly burdens.

A party of Abdallah's tribe garrisoned this town; and when he had arrived and told his tale, they deeply sympathized with our misfortunes. Several, as we landed, were waiting upon the opposite bank to receive us; and as we accompanied them along the streets, I could not but smile at the uncouth appearance of my companion Elliot, as well as my own. He was a handsome man; his features of the Jewish cast, but his hair now hung long and dishevelled. His clothes were tattered, and his feet nearly bare. I, as regards my garments, was in a still more indifferent plight; but I had devoted a few minutes in my passage across the river to my toilet, and succeeded in braiding my hair into the usual Bedowin plaits.

Notwithstanding his maimed condition, poor Abdallah had yet kindness enough to think of us, and one of his countrymen was despatched to procure us two sheep-skins. When clad in these,

our appearance, though perhaps not much improved in our own estimation, was greatly so in his. The hairy part being worn next to the skin, and the outer bedaubed with red ochre, reminded me of the appearance of Neptune's followers when decorated by sailors on crossing the line. We were ushered into the presence of the Sheikh, and were welcomed by him a thousand times.

A meal had been prepared for us of truffles and camel's flesh, served up in large wooden bowls; to these were added barley-meal cakes. Let not the reader be offended at my mention of these repasts; the recollection of them, even at this moment, considering how seldom they were obtained, and then how highly valued, is yet dear to me.

Abdallah could not join us. The anguish at parting with his beloved Zuleima was not yet passed; added to which, he was suffering intense pain from his arm. His attention, however, to us, never for a moment ceased: all our wants were supplied with a willingness and alacrity which could not fail to please.

In the morning he was visited by the doctor, also aided in his examination by Elliot, who had been formerly a surgeon. It was now discovered that the bone was not, as had been

supposed, broken, but the arm dislocated at the wrist and shoulder. He must have endured great agony from the rough mode they adopted in re-setting it, which was accomplished by manual force. The limb was then bound round by strips of palm, plastered over with eggs, and heated before the fire till they dried; these he was enjoined to continue till the limb was recovered.

Several Arabs were despatched in search of our camels, of which we could, however, obtain no intelligence. A thousand surmises were indulged: by some it was imagined they were discovered and seized by the Jerboa tribe; by others, that they had gone to their native pastures lower down the Euphrates; but the greater number referred their disappearance to supernatural causes—believing them, like the herd of swine in the Scripture, to scamper off while possessed by the devil. Such speculations, however, made but little difference to us.

Hit was free from plague, and Abdallah very ill. In vain I urged him to forego his intention of crossing the desert to Damascus. "My word is given," said this noble being, "to accompany you there, and shall I leave to others the performance of that task?"

I passed the time in my usual manner while

within an Eastern city. I made acquaintance with all classes; among others, with a Turkish tinker, who complained that his trade, amidst the frugal Arabs, would not thrive at all. "Cooking-pots," said he, "are so seldom required here, that I have plenty of spare time, which passes heavily on my hands." He was an amusing fellow, and accompanied me in all my wanderings about the town, and we became great friends. I lived with the Sheikh, who was very hospitable, but his visitors' room, a small apartment, was so constantly crowded with Arab guests, and so incessantly filled with smoke from the fire in the centre of the room, by which they made their coffee, that we were glad to keep outside it.

In the evening our party usually assembled round a Bedowin, who amused us with his rababa, a one-stringed instrument played with a rude bow. Some of the party generally accompanied him in the wild and plaintive airs; Antar* and his martial feats formed a favourite theme. Seldom did we retire to rest before one or two o'clock. All rose early, and I, like them, was at length compelled to make up this deficiency in my slumbers by a mid-day siesta.

* The Arabian Hercules.

Hit is a singular-looking town, built round a hill, and about a mile and a-half in circumference at the base. The houses are of stone, rising one above another, and at a distance have a very striking appearance.

It is situated on the southern bank of the river, 180 miles above Babylon. About three-quarters of a mile from the town there are some wells of bitumen. They are ten in number, and the fluid bubbles up with the hue and appearance of discoloured water. The bitumen collects on its surface, and is removed by large ladles constructed of the branches of the palm-tree. The water is conducted into shallow hollows, and its subsidence of salt forms, next to bitumen, the staple article of export from Hit. Both articles are, however, monopolized by the Pasha of Bagdat. The bitumen, after it cools, is divided into square masses, and is transported down the Euphrates to Hillah. When exposed to the atmosphere it becomes of a stony hardness, and is used in building. Wherever the casing of a house is subjected to the action of water it is preferred to all others. Well may we exclaim, that "there is nothing new under the sun." Let those who deal at present so largely in asphaltum take a hint from this. The refuse serves them for burning during the calcination of lime.

Not the least singular feature in the town of Hit is its extensive aqueducts. These are constructed over pointed arches, and extend to a great distance from the river. They are fed by rude wheels turned by the force of the current. In order to increase their velocity, walls have been carried nearly across the river, thereby confining the body of its waters to a narrower channel. In other cases the aqueducts are conducted to the centre of the stream. The wheels by which these are supplied are about thirty feet in diameter, and furnished round their margin with earthen pots; and as the lower portion becomes filled and turned by the force of the current, the upper empty themselves into troughs spread below to receive them. Hence the water is conducted into the aqueducts. These water-works are of great antiquity. They are evidently referred to in Ezekiel, chap. i., v. 15, and are also noticed during the time of Alexander.

At Hit a few Sabeans, or Christians of St. John, reside. I could, however, glean but little intelligence respecting them. The general opinion is, that they acknowledge our Saviour, but consider St. John as much entitled to relative respect as the Catholics do the Virgin; hence they are called Christians of St. John, but in reality I conceive them to be idolaters;

externally, either Christians or Mahomedans, according as it may serve their purpose.

One singular circumstance, however, came to my knowledge. A Parsee, who had strayed from India to Balkh, and was on his return, had lost his sacred cord, which he permitted a Subhee priest to replace. Does not this argue some connexion between their religious persuasions?

May I be permitted to remind the *general* reader, that the Parsees are the descendants of the followers of Zoroaster, who taught the most primitive religion—the worship of the sun, moon, and stars—the most natural religion with a people to which no other had been revealed.

CHAPTER XVII.

Departure from Hit—Kubbet-el-Marmora—Women yoked to the Plough ——Incident—Arab Simplicty—Enter on Desert Journey—Alarm from Bedowins—Monotonous Travelling—Desert Fare—Vast Flocks of Birds—Gazelles—Simoon—Abyssinian Bruce.

AFTER a delay of five days Abdallah's arm became better, and we then succeeded in purchasing two camels, a mother and its foal; the latter we killed, and it furnished the party, and a merry group which joined us, with several good meals. On the morning, accompanied by about fifty of the Agils, we quitted Hit. These were friends of Abdallah's, whose attachment to him appeared to be greatly increased as they witnessed the staunchness and good faith which could induce him, when thus maimed, to undertake so long and toilsome a journey as that before us. In vain several of the tribe volunteered to supply his place, and again I and Elliot offered to remain behind until he was perfectly recovered, but nothing shook his purpose. The strongest emotions of regret and sorrow, as they bid us farewell, were

depicted on the countenances of this simple people.

Our route lay to the westward for four hours, passing midway the ruins of a small Moslem town called Kubbet-el-Marmora, to the village of Cabaise, which is encircled by an extensive date grove and some few fields of barley. Here, as in other parts of Arabia, both are watered from a mineral spring, the temperature of which is about 95° Fahrenheit, and strongly impregnated with sulphur; but neither that quality, nor its heat, prevents its nourishing the surrounding vegetation.

I saw several females here literally performing the duties of bullocks—that is, in plain English, they were yoked to the plough. One was a very comely lass, and she answered my inquiries, laughingly, that they hired themselves for the purpose, the remuneration being a small quantity of grain. The men at the same time were standing looking on, with spinnets in their hands. An odd transfer of duties this! The reader may recollect that Sir Thomas Munro relates, as a reason why an Indian should be exempted from paying his taxes, that he pleaded —the late loss of his wife, who did as much work as two bullocks.

While halting for a few minutes at this vil-

lage, I had expressed a wish for an egg; the whole town was searched, and only one, belonging to an aged female, could be found. She brought it to me, but unwilling to deprive her of it, I declined accepting it; she then boiled, broke it in half, and again brought it to me.

Here our water-skins were to be filled, and our final preparation made for the desert journey. Some marauding parties had been seen in the early part of the day, and our departure was consequently deferred till the evening. We passed the intermediate time in baking cakes of millet flour. Our camels were prepared; we mounted, and I endeavoured, unnoticed, to slip a dollar into the hands of the poor man, our host. His fingers did not close on it, and it dropped to the ground. However unwilling, I was compelled to stoop, pick it up, and return it to my pocket. This poor creature had not probably a sous in the world. We drank up all his milk; his family had toiled the whole of the day for us; he was perhaps never to see the party again; and I, in return, in the presence of his countrymen, had wounded his feelings. Although the offence proceeded from a good motive, it was probably the most injudicious act of which I had been guilty during my travels; as it, to appearance, showed my ignorance of

the sacredness with which the Arabs observe the laws of hospitality.

I have heard it questioned by other travellers, if this is not more nominal than real. It was urged that they, as Englishmen, had passed through these countries, and that the full value was demanded and paid for whatever they received, and in the presents they were compelled to make to the attendants. The fact I have mentioned (and it was by no means a solitary one) is a sufficient answer. The Arabs there believed us Englishmen to be possessed of boundless wealth, and from such a people similar offerings, in accordance with Asiatic usages, are expected. As a poor man, I was considered a fit object to receive rather than to give. The fact is, that most of an Arab's acts may be traced to one general principle, an equalization of property—which is talked of, or exists only to appearance in other countries, but in Arabia approaches near to a reality. Thus an Arab, if he saw me with that which he had not, would lay hands on it and observe:—"What dost thou with this superfluous article? thine uncle requires it." Upon which, if he possessed the power, he would very coolly walk away with it. Reverse the picture—I am in want; the same individual will share his scanty store,

however small may be the pittance, and bless his Maker for affording him the opportunity of thus exercising his charity. This is no picture conjured up to satisfy a favourite theory; I have lived long and intimately with this simple people, and could, if it were necessary, cite many more instances in support of my position.

At ten o'clock at night we set forward on our journey, with but three camels—a party somewhat small to cross the vast Syrian desert. Very rarely, save in large caravans, was it now attempted. Hostile parties, robbing and plundering each other, were constantly traversing it. Our only provisions, in addition to the water, were the cakes I have mentioned, and a sack of dhoura flour. About two hours after midnight we halted, and again remounted at an early hour next morning. Continuing our course over a level desert, the surface of which was occasionally broken by tortuous ravines, we crossed the beds of several rapid water-courses which had formerly traversed them. Here an abundant crop of grass now springs up, intermingled with a great variety of flowers. I saw several beautiful solanums, which mingled their hue with the golden tint of waving butter-cups, or shared the fragrance of the wild thyme, mint, and a variety of other odoriferous herbs, the names of which were not familiar to me.

About noon we were discovered, some miles on our right, by a party of Arabs. Upon the principle that all we meet upon the desert are enemies, we made off to the northward. They pursued us. Finding it impossible, although they were on foot, to escape their superior fleetness, I persuaded Abdallah to halt. The strangers were nine in number, and resistance was out of the question. I had already fancied myself in a similar captivity to that at Wasut; but fortunately, when they reached us, we discovered they had no hostile intentions; the party being, in fact, of a small tribe called Al-Guzail, who subsist by hunting. They looked miserable, half-starved creatures; small of stature, with weak voices, sunken eyes, and coarse and hard features. To protect them when kneeling to take aim at their game, their knees are furnished with leathern caps. Antelope and other deer abound on these plains. We supplied the party with water and flour, and they then extinguished their matches and went their way, while we resumed ours.

After travelling the whole of the day, we halted in a ravine; the heavy saddles were removed, the fore-leg of each of the camels tied up, and they were turned loose to graze on the abundant herbage which grew around. We

dispersed ourselves for fire-wood, and were soon seated before a cheerful flame, cooking on its embers each his own share of barley-meal cakes.

A ship's log-book, which records the daily progress of the vessel through a waste of water, is not very interesting, nor is a desert journey, unless interrupted by more incident than fell to our lot, likely to supply entertainment or instruction; I shall therefore describe it in general terms. With the exception of the tribe I have just alluded to, during the whole journey we did not see one human being. In the day our course through this trackless waste was directed by the sun. Towards noon, when its vertical position rendered it difficult for us to do so, Abdallah would require me to point out the west, by means of the small compass I always carried with me. At night the stars answered a similar purpose. Abdallah was acquainted with the greater number of them.

For the first three days the district we passed over is called by the Arabs Al-Haman; its general aspect is perfectly flat, but this is furrowed by narrow ravines, some sinking more than an hundred feet; an abrupt precipice on either hand; their sides then expose masses of gypsum imbedded in limestone rock. These

ravines form a singular feature in the formation of the desert; apparently, they originate in the northern and more hilly portions of Syria, crossing the tract we are passing over, in their progress to the southward. Some of these were evidently the beds of streams; but this does not apply to all, as they were not unfrequently crossed by ridges of sand, sufficiently elevated to obstruct the passage of water, unless it rose to a great height. Valleys amidst mountainous districts have puzzled our geologists to account for: the erosion of streams is held to be wholly insufficient; but to what cause are we to refer the origin of these deep furrows in otherwise a level desert? Its surface becomes so indurated by the action of the sun's rays, that the heaviest rains which fall do not penetrate, but are deposited in hollows, or find their way into the ocean. During several rainy days which we experienced in this journey, we suffered greatly from the water in level tracts thus remaining without sinking. There was then no means of sleeping but on our camel-saddles; unless, indeed, we were sufficiently fortunate to encamp in the vicinity of some sloping eminence. Our track would next lead probably through a moving sheet of water, a mile and a-half in breadth, and eight or ten inches

in depth, flowing rapidly to the south-eastward. The almost resistless force such a mass must acquire, should it fall into a natural channel, may in some measure account for the devastated appearance of these valleys, although we still remain at a loss to account for their original formation.

Four days, or about a hundred miles from the banks of the Euphrates, the country rises with a gentle and gradual ascent, until nearly mid-way between that river and Damascus, where it is probably elevated a thousand feet above either of those points. The greater portion of the surface of this part of the desert is of gravel. We have no longer any ravines, but some singular-sloped table-hills, composed of limestone, of a white colour speckled with grey. They are broader at the upper part than the base, and their average height is from eighty to one hundred feet The wasted aspect they bore, acquired from the degrading action of the elements, causes them to appear as if they had been subjected to the action of a powerful stream. Distorted by atmospheric refraction, they not unfrequently assumed the appearance of castles, or other edifices.

Descending from this mid-way ridge, the country continues of the same description until

within a hundred miles of the roots of the Syrian mountain ranges, when ravines again make their appearance, and the surface of the desert is thickly covered by a layer formed of silicious fragments.

Our mode of life did not vary more than did the face of the country. At an early hour we were awakened by Abdallah's calls of "Goum," or "Yelloh,"* and his hoarse guttural calls to his camels. Few preparations had we to make for continuing our journey. Our water-skins were gradually getting lighter, as well as the meal-bag, and we were consequently soon away. The number of hours we were daily mounted was on an average ten, with a progress of two and three-quarters miles an hour. I gradually fell into Bedowin habits, and could mount and dismount without stopping the animal, with which Abdallah was greatly pleased; and at last I accomplished the long-envied habit (seldom acquired by Europeans) of sleeping on a camel.

Whenever we could discern traces of them, we eagerly dismounted to gather the truffles which every where grew abundantly in this part of the desert. Their position below is indicated by a small mound on the surface,

* "Hasten," "Rise."

having a fissure in the centre. The Arabs call them *ghimme*, and when roasted they formed an agreeable addition to our evening meal. Eggs of the bustard and desert partridge were found under every bush. In April and May, myriads of these birds resort here from the neighbouring countries, and were now engaged in the progress of incubation. Great numbers of young eaglets, mixed with them, were gorging themselves with their eggs; but the season when these birds would have formed fit food had passed, and they were now almost skeletons. Sea-fowl are numerous in certain parts of the world, but I never saw such myriads of the feathered tribe as were met here. At every few yards we disturbed vast numbers, which rose screaming and twittering around us.

On the summit of the ridge there was a rich and abundant pasturage, and we here found large herds of the wild gazelle. Although our fleetness might not have equalled that of Alexander Selkirk, yet when their age did not exceed a few days, we were enabled to run down, and tire them out; and one day we were fortunate enough to pick up seven. We killed them by cutting their throats, and they were then suspended from our saddles, their bereaved mothers following us the whole day. This evening formed

an oasis in my recollection of desert fare. The gazelles furnished a sumptuous repast, very different from our usual meal of dhoura bread.

Our evenings were passed in the following manner. We usually halted about two hours before sunset; our camels were then turned adrift to graze. Abdallah went forth with his single arm to gather fire-wood, while we kneaded our bread in a small trough. A hollow was dug in the ground, a fire lighted, and when the fuel was reduced to ashes our flat cakes were baked in the burning embers. Abdallah was used to such fare; but I found, towards the conclusion of my journey, that it ill agreed with me, causing the skin of my mouth to blister, and other scorbutic eruptions began to shew themselves. To avert as much as possible the ill effects of such food, I followed the Bedowins' plan of eating of a number of grasses which grow on the desert at this season. The best antiscorbutic is a small trefoil, much resembling in taste and appearance our water-cresses.

When our evening meal, the only one we partook of during the twenty-four hours, was concluded, our camels, which towards dark invariably returned of their own accord, were placed around, sheltering us by their bodies from the piercing westerly blast. With the sand

for our couch, and the blue vault of heaven for our canopy, we slumbered away the night in sounder sleep than many of those who, to appearance, recline upon far better places of repose. No fear of robbers or midnight ruffians disturbed us: we breathed the pure air of heaven; and our sleep, earned and rendered doubly refreshing by toil, left us to start in the morning with renewed life, vivacity, and vigour.

Three days before the termination of our journey, the snow-capped peaks of Lebanon shewed themselves on the horizon, although distant nearly eighty miles—a fact which alone bespeaks the uncommon purity and clearness of the atmosphere. Were this great desert cased with silicious instead of alluminous particles, it would be impossible to traverse it. There are no sand-hills throughout the whole distance. The strong westerly breezes sweep over the plains with almost resistless violence. They prevailed during the whole journey, sometimes with such strength as to compel us to halt. The camels then invariably turned their hind quarters to the wind, and refused to proceed.

We now crossed plains covered with swarms of locusts. These destructive insects, in a period of gestation, were listless and torpid. Arid and sandy wastes are indeed a fitting

birth-place for such desolating invaders. It is almost impossible for the mind to conceive at one view so prodigious a quantity of living matter. We sometimes passed over a patch of ground a mile in diameter, where they were so thickly studded, that hundreds were crushed at every step of our camels. They were of two kinds: one of a light brown colour, but small; the other larger, of a reddish tinge, called *makin*, and greatly esteemed for food. As with the Mosaical, the Mahomedan code expressly mentions locusts as lawful diet. In all Eastern cities they are publicly exposed for sale.

In crossing this part of the desert, Xenophon observes that wild asses and ostriches were abundant; the former are now never seen, but groups of the latter occasionally shew themselves. I doubt if the wild ass be now a desert animal, though we find it amidst the hills of Persia and Kurdistan.

The westerly winds were of a scorching dryness: my lips were parched and burnt by them, and my skin much shrivelled. The heat, aided by the sun's rays, after repeatedly stripping the skin from my face, had browned my complexion to a deep copper colour.

We hear of the poisonous simoom: has this blast any other noxious qualities than its intense

heat? I was at Bagdat when hot winds were particularly severe and frequent; there were at that time three pilgrims, who had traversed the burning plains of Sahara, and the great desert between Damascus and Mecca, and they acknowledged the superior heat of the blasts which then swept over that city. Not unfrequently the thermometer rises to 127° in the shade, killing all those unsheltered from its full influence. The process of corruption on such unfortunates is very rapid, producing all the effects our travellers have ascribed to the poisonous simoom.

A recent melancholy catastrophe, which robbed us of a few (alas! too many) of the brave Euphrates band, has exposed the fury of these desert tornados, upon which I must for an instant dwell. They sweep over the desert in a successive line of vortices, hurling high into the air bushes, huts, tents, or whatever may come within the sphere of their influence. In their progress they detach the micaceous particles of the sand, carrying them high up into the air, and giving them the appearance of moving columns, as described by Abyssinian Bruce. I have already noticed that this desert is too hard to admit of its disturbing the soil in any quantity; but what I hear from Africa, combined

with the result of my own observations on other occasions, leaves little doubt on my mind that that much calumniated and deeply slandered man has not exaggerated his picture.

It is a remarkable fact, that these atmospheric columns retain sufficient density to uphold their particles across the whole distance of the Persian and Arabian Gulf. I have been lying in Bushire roads, when the wind, blowing from the coast of Arabia, brought over such clouds of dust, that objects could not be discerned at the distance of a few yards. It was almost of an impalpable nature, and so searching, that it was with difficulty, and only by wrapping them in folds of unspun cotton, that it was prevented from entering the works of the chronometers.

I have heard it rumoured, that the vindication of Bruce, which it was my good fortune to furnish, together with some "gentle correction,"* which I was compelled to bestow on Lord Valentia, now Earl Mountmorris, has given umbrage to that nobleman, and that he contemplates a reply. I shall be glad to see it; and as I have merely additional *facts* to bring forward, the world will probably be glad to see my rejoinder.

* See Quarterly Review, No. CXXII. p. 315.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Arrival at Mucksureyeh—Appearance of Robbers—Ransom demanded—Ruins—Camel's Gate—Enter Damascus—Description of it—River Baraidy—Coffee-Houses—Turkish Cemeteries.

On the morning of the sixteenth day after quitting Hit, we entered the small village of Mucksureyeh. Our share of water for the last few days had been very scanty, and the dhoura bread so bad that I quite nauseated it. Here I had hoped to rest for a few days, and share in the good things which now grew in verdant tints around, contrasting in a singular manner with the dusky hue of the desert they fringe. I had, however, scarcely seated myself beneath the shade of an old olive tree, and was receiving the congratulations of Abdallah on his having safely brought us through the perils of the desert, when a pretty little girl ran up to the spot where we were seated, and, with alarm depicted in her countenance, informed us that a party of the Beni Sakr Arabs had entered

the village, and were then levying contributions on its inhabitants. Notwithstanding the alarm this occasioned, as they were not yet informed of our arrival, a meal was quickly prepared for us by some of the females. To this we gladly sat down; but hardly had we done so, ere the Sheikh of the hostile tribe made his appearance. He was a tall, martial-looking man, with his face muffled up, and an expression of countenance more fierce and gloomy than that of the Arabs in general. As soon as he cast eyes on the good things before him, he seated himself without any hesitation amidst us. I was pleased, notwithstanding the presence of our new and self-invited guest, to perceive Abdallah eat with a better appetite than usual. As for myself, now wholly indifferent, from the mode of life, to whatever change fate might bring, I enjoyed the present good, and did not allow myself to anticipate future evil.

After our meal was concluded, ablutions performed, and coffee brought, the Sheikh placed the crooked staff the Arabs always carry between his legs; then placing both his hands on it, and with his chin resting on them, he very coolly, and in a business-like tone, informed us that he was ready to receive our ransom. Abdallah sprang upon his legs in feigned amazement, and the usual altercation took place, in which I was,

for once in my life, too much exhausted to join. Sixteen days' hard camel-riding, of ten hours a day, would have deprived me, in addition to any superfluous flesh which I might have possessed, of all wish or desire for disputation. The shades of evening closed around us, and the dispute still continued. I heard the Sheikh fix the price of our ransom at one hundred dollars. "Well, here's another desert trip before me; however, if so," thought I, with Conrad, "more need of rest to nerve me for the morrow." So I went to sleep.

I awoke early in the morning, much refreshed by my slumbers; though a death-like torpor had come over me, which even the shrillness and shrieking of the two arch disputants could not break. They had talked till two in the morning, and the Sheikh, then fearful that his prey would escape him, had taken up his quarters by us. What a singular people! He who was actually engaged in an attempt to rob the party, nevertheless, did not hesitate to trust himself asleep beside them!

I arose unperceived, leaving Elliot to his slumbers, and strolled over the village, in the vicinity of which, to my utter surprise (for no mention is made of it by any preceding traveller), I found the ruins of a Grecian temple of the Corinthian order. It was about

sixty paces in length, and twenty-five in breadth; its height was fifty feet. The whole building had evidently belonged to the best times of Grecian architecture. A handsome pediment surmounted some exquisitely proportioned pilasters. The door was now closed up, and the interior used as a cow-house. I made my way past several of these animals to the sanctum, which also was closed; and I regret that the want of light prevented my copying the inscriptions with which its walls were covered. I have little doubt but that these remains occupy the site of a frontier station of the Græco-Tyrians; for the ruins of that age were every where scattered around: broken friezes, architraves, fragments of columns and elaborately ornamented and carved sarcophagi, meet the eye in every direction, and denote the former magnitude and importance of the place. The city is supplied with water by means of an aqueduct, which conveys it from the neighbouring hills; they are distant about a quarter of a mile, and after irrigating the contiguous grounds, which are richly cultivated, the stream flows into a neighbouring lake called the Bahr el Merj.

On my return to the spot I had quitted, I found our disputants still hard at work; but their clamour ceased when the morning meal

made its appearance, to be again resumed when it was finished. Satisfied, however, that I could not without Abdallah effect my escape, I was permitted to stroll about in the vicinity of the village, and even to make a short excursion about three miles to the N.E. of it, where, I learnt, there were some "Faringi" remains. I found two shapeless mounds, the surfaces of which were strewn with fragments of glass and pottery. In their vicinity were a few wells, which served to irrigate several small fields of grain.

Our new friends, the Beni Sakir, detained us for ten days, and then, finding it absolutely true that we had no money, (but one dollar concealed in my waist-belt,) they at length restored to us our camels, and permitted the party to depart.

I could not avoid noticing the remarkable variety in the physiognomy of this tribe: few retain the well-known characteristics of the true sons of Ishmael, partaking rather of those of the Turcomans. Their females enveloped their persons in long white shirts, tied behind the neck, with the arms left bare.

Eight hours' brisk riding, after quitting Mucksureyeh, brought us to Damascus. The first part of our road lay over a highly cultivated plain; on our right extended a low range of

hills, which form the roots of the Lebanon ranges; to the left was a broad flat plain, perhaps fifteen miles in width, called the Vale of Sham. Midway we passed numerous villages, picturesquely situated amongst groves of olives, walnuts, poplars, peaches, apricots, and a thousand other fruits: we were in the far-famed gardens of Damascus. Clustering vines enwreath themselves around the monarchs of the forest—sparkling cascades gleam out from beneath the entangled foliage—a thousand rills intersect our path—the feathered choristers carolled their sweet notes above us. I was enraptured with the contemplation of the scene, and considered myself, even in the hurried glances which I took of all around me, amply repaid for all my toil and privations in the desert.

We entered the city of Damascus by the Bab el Jemel, or the Camel's Gate. The swarthy appearance and tattered garments of Elliot and myself exempted us from the toll which is levied upon Christians, and we proceeded with Abdallah to the Arab quarter, passing through several very narrow lanes, from which the light of heaven was so completely obscured, that, as at Bagdat, the bats were flying around. The houses are not so lofty as those in most Oriental

cities, but in other respects they are very similar. After the loneliness of the desert, all was cheerfulness, plenty, and life. How can I paint the satisfaction with which I viewed those heaps of luscious fruits! those piles of the freshest cakes! or the envied gazes I cast on those happy groups who were calmly sipping their coffee or partaking of those deliciously iced sherbets! But, like the cup of Tantalus, they were only pressed to our lips to be withdrawn; for neither Elliot, Abdallah, nor myself, had a single sous. "We must sell a camel," said Abdallah, viewing the abundance around with the same longing eyes as my own. "Be it so," replied I; "but, in the name of the prophet, let it be done quickly." In the course of an hour he returned with thirty dollars, the sum he obtained for one. This was affluence; and on it a very sensible improvement in my wardrobe took place here: very capacious breeches, a new turban, bright yellow slippers, and a new sabre, transformed me from the simple garb of the desert again into a Turkish dandy.

As the only recompense for his faithful services in bringing us in safety across the great desert, I presented Abdallah with the two remaining camels; and, halting but a day, he proceeded, amidst pestilence and famine, to seek

in Bagdat the fate of Zuleima, the beloved of his bosom. The sequel of his melancholy story I have already given. Such manliness, generosity, and gallantry, as were possessed by Abdallah, render me happy, a citizen of the world, in being able to have called him a friend: he had within him all the elements of true nobility; and, with a better field for its display, would have formed a great character. When I recurred to his devotion to me, as he came to bid me farewell, I felt an emotion I should have been but too happy to have experienced in scenes of more civilized life.

A few words on Damascus. There is a traditional story, almost too hackneyed for repetition, but which is, nevertheless, interesting, as it teaches us to estimate an Oriental's ideas of the charms of natural scenery. The prophet Mahomed is said to have gazed from the contiguous hills on the gardens, the groves, the sparkling streams beneath, and to have turned away and exclaimed, "This is, indeed, too delicious!" With the perhaps more practised eye of a traveller who has witnessed nature in the gay apparel she wears in India, let me endeavour to convey, from the same spot, my own impressions.

Below is spread a delightful and extensive

plain, or rather a vast oasis, about twelve miles in diameter, the naked hills of Lebanon skirting it to the westward, and so distant as scarcely to be distinguished. On either side the plain is otherwise bounded by the desert. About two miles to the eastward of the mountains, embosomed amidst gardens and stately groves, stands the city of Damascus. The sun is gilding its almost innumerable mosques and minarets, which rear on high their lofty heads. The leaves of the poplar quiver in its beams; while the cypress,

"Dark tree, the only constant mourner o'er the dead,"

thrusts itself boldly forward, and reminds us that, even in this living scene, there are the emblems of death. Summer-houses, turrets, and obelisks, present themselves at every opening, and with the large spaces serving as gardens, the verdure of which is of a fresher and livelier tint, diversify or add to the picture.

Damascus owes its importance and fertility solely to the river Baraidy, the golden stream of the Arabs. It takes its rise amidst the heights of Lebanon, and thence descends in thin streams to the city. The longest stream flows through the city; while the other two, branching off right and left, contribute to feed the cultivated ground; the three then empty themselves

into the Bahr al Merj, about fifteen miles to the eastward. The umbrageous foliage of the trees, amidst which I missed my old favourite, the palm, prevents the observer from distinctly ascertaining the exact limits of the city; but houses peep out in all directions, and cover an irregular space of about five miles in length. Damascus is not now a fortified town, although it was so formerly; and some remains of the walls may yet be traced amidst the houses, and would furnish abundant food for the antiquary. Inscriptions of the Greek, Roman, and Califat ages constantly occur thereon.

Damascus, therefore, in consequence of the absence of walls, has none of those handsome gates which are at once the pride and ornament of other eastern cities; and its only defence is a large castle, resembling a small town, about one hundred paces in breadth and one hundred and fifty in length. It is but poorly fortified. Herein was manufactured and forged the famous Damascus steel; and within the armoury there still remain some of the arms, &c. of the earlier Christians.

Few places have changed masters so often as this city, which owes its origin to the highest antiquity; it is even mentioned in Jeremiah. I find it ascribed to Uz, the great grandson of

Noah, whose father, Shem, possessed himself of Syria; but it has not, as a modern traveller supposed, on that account acquired its present appellation of Sham, but from its being in the western quarter. This city has successively been possessed by the Jews, Assyrians, Babylonians, Parthians, Greeks, Romans, Christians, and lastly, Moslems, who have now retained possession of it for centuries.

Many of its churches still remain, and are converted into mosques. Of these, the most superb, and second probably only to those of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and St. Omar at Jerusalem, is the ancient cathedral of St. John the Baptist, erected by the earlier Christians. Within this mosque the Turks preserve several relics—among others, the head of that apostle. Mahomedans believe that Christ, on the day of judgment, will descend into this mosque, while Mahomed enters that of St. Omar at Jerusalem. I could not obtain admittance, and am therefore unable to give a description of it; but I frequently passed by the road leading across its court, which is beautifully paved with marble. The whole length of the building is three hundred and twenty paces, and its breadth eighty. The court, on three of its sides, is surrounded by two rows of granite columns of the Corinthian

order, forming a lofty and beautiful cloister. The gates are of enormous size, wholly covered with brass. Within the court there is a capacious basin, into which the waters of a beautiful fountain discharge themselves. These fountains are very numerous in the private houses. Few of the larger edifices but have one within the open court, bordered by orange and citron trees, paved with variegated marble, and inlaid with great taste and beauty. They have a cool and charming appearance, and present a striking contrast to the confinement and filth of the streets. Here, too, during the day, parties may be perceived, smoking or sleeping on mats or carpets, sheltered by the foliage above, and enjoying the refreshing currents of air which, courted by the peculiar construction of the dwelling, as well as the playing of the stream, constantly pass through them. In the evening the inhabitants not unfrequently take their meals there, and I have often, on such occasions, admired the hospitality of the host, who at the moment he seats himself, should a person be at the gateway, however poor or mean his condition or garb, invites the stranger to take a seat and share his meal with him.

There is a class of travellers who are fond of referring the hospitality we receive in these countries to ostentation, rather than generous motives. Where the result is good, I am content with the aspect the exterior presents, without going out of the way to discover the rottenness within. Remove the veil from human nature, and what shall we discover to be the source of all our actions and impulses? Let those answer the question who dare to examine and grapple with it.

Coffee-houses are the places of general resort throughout the East; there is passed that leisure time which in more civilized countries is engrossed by operas or theatricals, or with our lower grades in gin palaces.

Let us visit the interior of the principal one, which is picturesquely situated on a small island on the river Baraidy. The stream holds its course with headlong fury over a rocky bed, and almost dashes its spray into our face as we seat ourselves beside it. This retreat is a light and elegant building, formed of trellised alcoves, clustered with the tendrils of the vine, and sufficiently capacious to entertain under the shade of its trees five hundred people. There a party in the corner are sipping their coffee, not list-

lessly, as it is the fashion to observe of them, but coolly discussing a bargain, and only removing their *narjid* to speak. Not far from them is a second group playing at drafts or chess; a third listening to a minstrel, who, with a guitar of Albania, is accompanying its simple melody with his voice. Elsewhere a circle are seated around and eagerly listening to a professed story-teller, who is reciting a tale from the Thousand and One Nights. That man who sits so silent, so mournful, has just lost a favourite wife; beside him is a stranger unknown to all, who is looking on and counting his beads. Again, another has called for his simple meal of *kabobs*;* and behind him a merry group of boys are drinking iced sherbet, and laughingly complaining of the manner in which it burns them. So much for the listless scene our travellers have painted for us.

The inhabitants of Damascus may be estimated at 150,000. Like those of Bagdat, they are a mixed race of Turks, Arabs, and Georgians, grounded on the original stock of Amalekites; but I think that other characteristics predominate over those of the Arabs; that they, in fact, in fairness of complexion and regularity of features, approach to the contour of the Turks.

* Roast meat and onions on sticks.

Like that people, in youth, they shave their chins; but the more aged are proud of retaining that venerable symbol of manhood.

The females are tall, with a roundness of limb and fulness of figure, which however does not approach to corpulency. They appear more abroad than the females of most other eastern cities. Both male and female, with a feeling growing out of the numerous natural beauties by which they are surrounded, are fond of passing their leisure hours in gardens, where they sit under the shade of the trees, sipping their sherbet, or otherwise amusing themselves with innocent sports.

I know nothing which displays the Moslem character to more advantage than the care they bestow on those "cities of the silent," their burial-grounds. On Friday (the Moslem Sunday) those of Damascus afford at once a touching and an animating scene. The site selected for the remains of those most cherished in life is generally picturesquely situated, in some lower spot, beneath the lofty cypress or quivering poplar. Here a head-stone of marble, covered with inscriptions, and, if a male, surmounted with a turban, mingles with costlier buildings, of an oblong form, very tastefully and elaborately inscribed with sentences from the Koran.

The greatest care is observed in preserving these sepulchral monuments. A small aperture is left in some portion, which is filled with earth, and in them the females plant myrtle and other flowers, and not unfrequently water them with their tears. On the day I have named, they may be perceived in groups, hastening to perform the sad but pleasing office of mourning for the departed.

CHAPTER XIX.

Damascus—Shawls and Sword-blades—Narrow Escape—Turkish Pacha—Dancing Boys—Caravan Pilgrimage—Bedowin Robbers, punishment of.

FROM the remotest periods Damascus has been celebrated for its shawls, its embroidery-work, and steel. The singular excellence of the last was considered to depend on some peculiar property of the water: but such does not in reality appear to be the case; for when Tamarlane, after his desolating visit, carried off the workmen to Khorassan, the value of Damascus blades ceased, while those of the town to which the makers of them were transferred obtained, and has ever since preserved, the envied superiority. Those beautiful silks, known in Europe as damasks, are still fabricated here, as are the richest shawls of the most gorgeous and brightest hue. The latter are in great request at the feast of the Aid, (instituted in commemoration of God staying the hand of Abraham,) when every person clothes himself in his best apparel.

Rose-water, in large quantities, is distilled from the famous damask roses, which are reared within the surrounding gardens in great abundance. Soap also forms a very considerable item of export from Damascus: it is made by mixing the oil expressed from olives with ashes of wood brought in by Bedowins from the neighbouring desert. Not only is every kind of fruit found here, but the grain is equally varied and plentiful: of the former, we have melons and cucumbers of various kinds, beans, kidney-beans, onions, lintels, &c. &c.; of the latter, we have Turkey wheat, millet, and barley. More attention is paid to agricultural pursuits than in, perhaps, any other part of the East; yet their implements of agriculture are not of a better order; the plough is of the rudest description.

The harvest usually commences about the middle, and terminates about the 25th of May. In these countries there is little variation in the approach or duration of the seasons. As soon as the grain is cut down, or, what is more commonly done, plucked up by the roots, the whole stock, to prevent it from being damaged by either damp or rain, is removed to within granaries, which are usually situated on some mound or elevated spot; here it is perfectly dried, and

safety assume the Frank garb in the streets; and he was forbidden to ride on horseback, or in any other manner to move about the streets, save on foot or mounted on asses. The latter, in itself, is not considered a degradation, as they stand ready bridled and saddled in the streets, for the use of all classes. This spirit of intolerance was fostered and encouraged by every religious fanatic who arrived within a city considered as one of the gates of Mecca; and on many occasions even European public functionaries were grossly insulted, without any means of redress being left open to the nations they represent. On the sea-coast our navy always, in a measure, ensured a certain respect to our flag; but Damascus, from its inland position, was beyond our reach.

With my swarthy complexion and nature's gloss, I continued for some days to ride through the town unmolested; but, in consequence of my having very imprudently during the day visited the French Consul, a suspicion arose that I was not what I appeared to be. One morning I was quietly proceeding along the bazaar, when a green-turbaned sheriffe placed himself before my horse, seized it by the bridle, and enquired, "How now, friend, does it so happen that I have never met thee within the

watching the progress of the affair, rushed forward, and with some difficulty, and the loss of half my raiment, extricated me from the crowd. He then bore me to a shop—pacifying the most clamourous and outrageous with the assurance, that though not yet a Mahomedan, I was, under his tuition, about to become so.

In the course of a few minutes, as the rabble which had at first collected gave place to individuals more respectable, the course of public opinion changed entirely in my favour. Some water was brought to wash my bruises, and to cleanse the stains of blood from my person; my horse also reappeared, I was assisted to mount, and then quietly permitted to ride to my lodgings. Hardly had I arrived there, when there entered the door a chouass from the Pacha, who unceremoniously directed me to follow him. I did so in silence, no way pleased either with the taciturnity of my companion, or the very respectful air and wary distance from our persons with which every person we met honoured us. I did not feel my head very secure.

I was led through a marble gateway, either side of which was tastefully inlaid and elaborately ornamented with variegated marble; thence through a double door, and across an open court, checquered also with marble of dif-

ferent colours, into the hall of audience, which was of an octagonal form, and lighted from the upper part by a glass cupola. The Pacha was seated on his divan, raised about two feet from the ground; around him, with folded arms, stood his attendants in silence. Casting my eyes rapidly over the group, I perceived my companion Elliot, who smiled, as he caught my eye, at my tattered appearance. I was now certain all was right, and advanced with some confidence on the summons of the Pacha to approach.

"Thou art," said he, addressing me as I drew near, "an Englishman."

"I am so," replied I, convinced all further concealment would be unnecessary, as well as useless. "You are welcome," was the gracious answer, and I was motioned to be seated. I soon learnt that intimation of the disturbance had been carried to the Pacha, who immediately sent to our quarters, where Elliot was found and brought before him. A perfect Turkish scholar, it cost him little trouble to explain that we were under the protection of the British Resident at Bagdat, and that entirely won his good graces. I was then congratulated on my escape from the rioters, the guards were dismissed, other garments were prepared for me, and we were ushered

into a small room, where the Pacha soon joined us, and intimated that our meal that day was to be shared with him. We were partly indebted for this honour to his desire to hear privately respecting the then state of parties at Bagdat and Busrah, and also some details respecting the commerce between the latter city and India—in which, through agents, he had invested, and eventually lost, some considerable sums.

When we had gratified his curiosity on these several points, he listened with much interest to the details of our journey across the desert. A Turk seldom even mounts on horseback if he can avoid it; and that we, merely for the sake of seeing other countries, should voluntarily undertake such long and tedious journeys, should endure toil and dangers, to merely see other countries, appeared to him most absurd and ridiculous. Rising when he had completed one of these remarks, he took me by the hand, and conducted me to the roof of the apartment; then casting his eyes on the scenery around, he observed—

"Look, there is running water—there are trees, mountains, and beyond is the desert; what more can thy wanderings bring thee; in beauty can they excel that picture? All these, I am informed, thou hast in thine own country,

and yet thou goeth forth to seek others which do not differ from them." The Pacha was one of the most intelligent men of his nation that I have met with, and we did not quit his presence until long after midnight. On the following morning a present of two sheep, a bag of dollars, and some few other articles, was quite sufficient to establish firmly, so long as we remained in the city, our respectability and good treatment.

I did not forget the man to whose courage I was indebted for the preservation of my life, and an interest with the Pacha enabled me to obtain for him a lucrative situation under the government. Many of my evenings at Damascus were passed at his house, where a great number of the most respectable merchants usually assembled. Our amusements on these occasions was chess and draughts, in both of which they were tolerably expert; but some of their other games are trifling, and quite inconsistent with the usual gravity of their demeanour. One consists in concealing beneath a cup either a ring, or some other trifling article, and several other cups are then placed in the same position, but he who guesses aright has the privilege of awarding a forfeit, such as having their faces blacked, &c. &c., to his companions.

Dancing boys sometimes formed a part of the entertainment; but in their performances, the legs and feet are less employed than the arms and body, and they are certainly in other respects not formed to suit an European's taste.

The great Syrian caravan, prior to setting forth on the pilgrimage to Mecca, assembles at Damascus. For six weeks they continue to arrive and pitch their tents on the plains south of the city, until their number amounts to thirty or forty thousand. These tents are of a green colour, variegated near the top with other colours. For their conveyance it is computed that not less than eighty thousand camels are required; these are principally furnished by the Anaize Bedowins, who have arrogated to themselves the monopoly. Some few other tribes, upon condition of paying a portion of the profits, are, when their own camels are not sufficient in number, allowed to join the procession.

The clothing of the pilgrim-camel which conveys the Sultan's annual present to the sacred city, is a work of some ceremony, and the raiment is afterwards in great request, under an impression that it will cure the most obstinate and dangerous diseases. It is more sought after than the most celebrated physicians, and often effects the desired purpose merely by the implicit faith which is put in it.

The only vehicle used in these caravans for females and sick persons is a litter, called a *terktarawahan,* which is borne either on one camel, or between two; every one else rides on his camel, except indeed the very poorest classes, who accomplish the whole distance (sixty-three days) on foot. For subsistence these latter depend upon the charity of the more wealthy pilgrims, who are supposed to extend it more readily at this period than at any other. Great numbers of this poor class perish on the road. Not more than two-thirds return on ordinary occasions; and in sickly seasons, such, for instance, as was 1831 at Mecca, more than half were swept off. The cholera that year ravaged the city, and its effects were awful. The road from Jedda to Mecca was strewn with dead and dying, and for a time it was found impossible to obtain a sufficient number of Bedowins for the camels. When the disease was at its highest, the inhabitants decorated a camel, and after leading it through various parts of the city, with the same feeling as induced the Israelites to cast adrift their scape-goat, they slaughtered it, and cast its flesh to the winds, fancying, as they themselves expressed, that the sickness would by these means be dispersed.

Whatever may be an Oriental's other virtues, charity for those who are unwell cannot be

numbered amongst them. When at Muscat my indignation was roused by seeing the manner in which a dying pilgrim was removed from one boat to the other. Before I had time to interfere, he was flung as if he had been a bale of old clothes into the bottom of the vessel. I know not from what cause this arises, but it forms a prominent and marked stain on the Moslem character. We might almost be induced to suppose, from what, on such occasions, any one who has been in this country must have witnessed, that they, like certain Kaffre tribes, consider it a disgrace to be unwell. It may also be observed, that while sick they are all courtesy and civility to their medical men; but should the practitioner be a Christian, when recovered, they treat him with arrogance and rudeness; his services are speedily forgotten when they cease to be required, and the recovery is wholly ascribed to Divine interposition.

I paid repeated visits to the encampment, and was somewhat surprised to find the pilgrims less intolerant than the inhabitants of the city. As I cast my eyes around on the assembled group, and beheld the motley assemblage of beggars, dervishes, pilgrims, merchants, and Bedowins; the African, in nature's dusky garb; the Osmanli, in his rich and flowing

robes; the Arab from Yemen, the desert, or Bahrain; the merchant of Mausul, distinguished by the graceful folds of his turban; and the swarthy Mugrable, shrouded in his ample burnoose; it was impossible not to feel regret at the misguided zeal which induces so many poor wretches to quit their homes and their families, to visit, after the lapse of so many ages, the tomb of a mortal and an imposter. We can yet, however, scarcely avoid conceding our admiration of the talents of a man who could found a religion which has extended from the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates to the remotest portions of Tartary—from the pyramids of Egypt to the deserts of southern Africa.

To turn, however, from the contemplation of a subject at once so pleasing and attractive as the progress and decline of Saracenic greatness, our province now must be with the holy city of Mecca, the birth-place of Mahomed.

It is not known at what remote period the Caaba, or Temple of Mecca, became an object of pilgrimage. The Mahomedans contend that it is the most ancient building on the face of the globe; which it most assuredly would be, did we credit the tradition of the Arabs, that it was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, on the site of an antediluvian tabernacle, which was

reared by Adam himself. It is very certain, however, that the genuine antiquity of this famous edifice extends beyond the Christian era. Diodorus Siculus, indeed, mentions that, from its sanctity, it was much revered by all the Arabians.

It is not improbable that the mighty stream of commerce which has ever flowed between the East and West originated here; for even at this period caravans, blending their religious missions with commercial pursuits, are described as arriving in great numbers; and thus employed in either vocation, they there passed several weeks.

Many of the rites and ceremonies were the same as those now practised, of course excepting the human sacrifice. This horrid rite was but a portion of the universal superstition in which the whole world was enthralled. In Egypt, Phœnicia, Rome, and Carthage, the altars have been polluted with human gore; and in the South Sea Islands, to this day, the life of a human being is considered as the most precious oblation which can be offered to a supreme Power.

The city of Mecca for ages has been shrouded from the gaze of unbelievers; but it has at various periods figured as the scene of events the most important to the Eastern world. De-

barred by the prohibition of the prophet, no Christian had ventured to visit its shrine; that task was reserved for the indefatigable Burckardt. Disguised as a pilgrim, and speaking the Arabian language with fluency and ease, he found little difficulty in encircling the Caaba, kissing the black stone, or performing the other rites of their faith. So minute are his details on all subjects connected with these, the inhabitants, and their city, that little is left for other travellers; his historical notices are, however, brief, and confined to the immediate period of his visit. What is here narrated either does not occur in his pages, or was transacted after his visit.

In the East, no one thinks of committing passing events to paper; and but for the disjointed and casual notices of travellers who pass through them, the history of whole provinces, however interesting or striking the scenes occurring therein, would be wholly blank.

When the whole multitude forming this Syrian caravan has assembled, the Pacha, superbly mounted, rides past and takes possession of his tent, and the following morning the firing of a gun is a signal for the breaking up of the encampment. The whole are now partitioned into several divisions, each under the

command of an officer, who possesses every power but that of life and death—which is in the hands of the Pacha only. Banners, differing by slight particulars, are then given to each. In the day they are borne aloft, to be conspicuous to all, while at night they are illumined with lamps, and carried, with the camel bearing the treasure, at the head of the column; so that a straggler, at any time, is enabled to recognize the division to which he belongs.

On one camel, gorgeously caparisoned, is borne the Koran; on another, the mahmal, or sacred banner of the prophet; both are accompanied by a band of music, and by the greater number of the inhabitants of the city, who proceed for some short distance. For the first day, notwithstanding the authority of the Pacha, many quarrels take place, and there is much confusion; but, on the second, every person has taken his station, which is not again changed until they reach the holy city. In consequence of the great heats, the caravan only travels at night, halting about two hours after sunrise, and sleeping through the day, until about four in the afternoon, when they again resume their journey. There are stalls at various distances, and even granaries, from which the wealthy

purchase, but which, at the expense of the Grand Signor, corn is furnished gratis to the mendicants and poorer classes who accompany the caravan.

The passage between Damascus and Mecca is, however, liable to constant interruption, and has sometimes been closed for several years. Such events are most commonly occasioned by the treachery of the Pachas, who withholds from the Bedowin Sheiks the usual passage-fees, or otherwise maltreat them. The latter are not, however, slow in retaliating on such occasions. Ever on the look-out for such as are left behind, or separate themselves by accident from the main body, they constantly rob and beat, but seldom kill, the then defenceless Turks. A horrible death, however, awaits those who are detected thus pilfering from the caravan. They are, the instant the halt is made, impaled alive; yet, so much dexterity is required, and so great is the fame the young Bedowin acquires as caravan robber, that numbers, spite of the punishment, will devote themselves for years to it. I was acquainted with one man, Ibrahim, who in his youth, after being taken, had twice, by his dexterity, escaped before the sentence could be put into execution against him. On

the second occasion his elbow joint was shattered by a matchlock ball, and the difficulty he consequently experienced in afterwards managing his war-camel compelled him, though with reluctance, to abandon his favourite employment.

CHAPTER XX.

Damascus revisited—Death of a Pacha—Capuchins—Visit Lebanon, its Cedars—Hurricane—Reflections.

I PAID a second visit to Damascus some months after the former, and found a considerable change had taken place in the politics of that city. For many centuries it had stoutly withstood the impost of any taxes, when Selim Pacha was directed to replace my old friend (who proceeded to India), and, as the price of his appointment was to carry into effect certain ad valorem taxes, a rebellion was the result, and Selim took shelter in the castle, where he was starved, for the time, into an abandonment of his designs. It was, however, but for a time, for he had no sooner collected together a party, than he again endeavoured to enforce the same measures. Nothing less now than his life would satisfy the infuriated townsmen, and one morning they rose simultaneously, and marched to his dwelling. Selim

and his adherents defended themselves bravely; one by one his followers fell, until at length he was left alone; retiring then to a small apartment furnished with a massive door, he for a long time resisted the utmost efforts of his foes to force it. Here he continued to fire through one of the apertures until twenty-three are said to have fallen by his hand; his bullets were now expended; collecting, therefore, all the powder (it was in a magazine) into a heap, he placed upon this his cushion, and there seated himself to await the moment when they should force the door. By the aid of fire, this they at length effected—it burst open. "*Benim* (enter)," said the Pacha, coolly turning his pipe over on the powder, and in an instant, he and some hundreds of his foes were blown to pieces.

The matter was now ended, and on the following morning the mutilated fragments of the Pacha's corpse were very diligently sought for. Some were found, and being placed in a coffin, were then borne, followed through the city in great pomp by the inhabitants, to without the walls, where it was buried with every decency and solemnity. "Singular," said I to an old Arab, who was relating this to me some months afterwards, "that you should thus first murder a man and then subsequently pay so much honour

to his remains." "You speak," said he, "as one whom the prophet hath not enlightened. Is it not written in the blessed book, that with the approach of death all hatred should cease?"

I have already mentioned the fray I got into during my first visit to this city; I encountered far more risk on my second. During my stay at Tyre, not knowing of the late disturbances, I had agreed with another gentleman to return and pass some weeks here; scarcely had we entered the city, than from our dress, which unfortunately resembled that worn by the instructors in the Egyptian army, we were pronounced to be spies; at first we heard their suspicions breathed in whispers; a crowd soon collected and followed to watch our movements. My friend, poor Langton, (now alas! no more,) suggested that we should at once face about and declare who we were. We did so, but in an instant were torn from our horses, and a fierce debate arose whether or not we should be put to death on the spot. Fifty swords were unsheathed in an instant to put this into execution, when it was suggested that it would not be proper that the streets of the holy city of Damascus should be polluted by the blood of such "foreign swine," but that

we should be led without the town and there stoned to death.

This party bid fair to carry the day, for after about an hour's debate, we found ourselves hurried along in that direction. Death I had faced too often to feel otherwise than a Christian and a soldier at its approach; still there was something in being thus led forth by these stern fanatics, to die the death of a dog, which required no common energy with the dignity of a man to meet it. Neither Langton nor myself, however, spoke a word: at first he had drawn a pistol from his girdle, but, at my most earnest entreaty, had thrown it from him. There was one man with a florid complexion, light grey eyes, and white moustachios, who had bared his arm, and with delight expressed on his countenance, was amusing himself with brandishing with naked arms the usual crooked dagger which the Arabs wear, as near as he could without actually wounding us in our faces.

At length we arrived at an open spot, and two stakes were sent for and driven in the ground. Already with cords in their hands had they approached to bind us to them, when an old Moolah with a venerable white beard advanced and called for silence; in an instant all was hushed. "You seek," said he, "the

lives of these men because you apprehend they are spies from the Egyptian army; but," raising his voice aloud, "is there no one here who recognizes," pointing to me, "Khalil Aga, the Englishman, and friend of Mustapha Pacha our late governor?" Fortunately for me, I had been well known there: several stepped forward and identified me. It was now my turn to speak. I said but little, merely intimating that the English and French were now, as ever, a distinct people, that we had no connection with them, or with the Egyptian army, but that we were two English gentlemen, under the protection of the British resident, and as such, although we were but two, and that our lives might be taken with the same facility as they might crush a fly, yet I bid them remember we were of a nation that would exact an ample reparation for any injury that might befall us; that, in fact, for every hair of our heads would a life be demanded.

I believe my words, added to the Moolah's, produced some effect, for the mob began gradually to steal off, and left us alone with the Moolah and his party. "This is no place now for you," said he, "they have but to meet some opium-eating fanatic, and he will bring them quickly back, therefore mount these horses," bidding

two of those near him to get off, "and ride for your lives; the money for them you can transmit me from Tripoli, the amount I leave to you." We pressed the hand of our kind and venerable friend, and were soon away in the direction of Tripoli, with all the speed we could gain from our horses.

I was not displeased to hear, some months after this event, that Damascus had fallen before Ibrahim Pacha, and that Christians now enjoy the same respect within the walls as in other parts of the East. When a British resident was recently nominated to reside here, it was very properly insisted that, to assume his office, he should be permitted to ride on horseback through the streets. Considerable opposition was made to his progress, and it was not until after the sacrifice of several lives, who fell victims to their intolerant zeal, that he effected his object; but having once done so, further opposition ceased, and the Christian at Damascus now enjoys the same freedom of gait as in any other Eastern city.

The Mahomedan religion seems every where to have received a blow it will never recover; events of the last half century have all gone to elevate the cross above the crescent; the more sensible Turks feel this, and bow with submis-

sion. Haughty intolerance is confined to the lower orders, and the polished conversation and manner of the Turkish gentleman would form, with strangers, a model in any society. Most of their long-cherished religious prejudices are melting away before their more extended communication with more civilised parts of the world. Twenty years ago, it would have cost an European his life to have passed at Jedda through the Mecca gate, but now the sacred ground has been crossed by unbelievers in every direction, and not many months ago, while being entertained in the Turkish camp, a number of officers of the Indian navy were supplied with a meal cooked within the wall of the holy city, from which they were, at the time, but a distance of two miles; the Sheriffe even came out to see and converse with them; but they spoke of this dignitary as a person of no intelligence and of mean appearance.

So long as the Turks maintained a naval force in the Red Sea, Jedda and Mecca were governed by a Pacha of three tails, who shared their government and revenues with the Sheriffe, still respected as the successor and representative of the ancient Caliphs of the country. The Cadis and other municipal officers were also appointed by the Porte; but with

the disappearance of their ships declined the Turkish power. The Pachas, unsupported by military retainers, became mere tools in the hands of the Sheriffes, who finally resumed the government, and transferred the whole of the revenues to their own coffers. At this period the Sheriffe was recognized as the head of the Mahomedan church, and possessed therefore, like the Pope of Rome, both temporal and secular authority. With the Bedowins, however, his power did not rise higher than that of a Great Sheikh, or Sheikh of Sheikhs. They obeyed his summons during war, and were supported by him so long as they remained in the field, but received no pay. A small body guard attached to his person served also to maintain order in the cities. His usual residence, however, was at an extensive castle called Marbara, about three miles from Mecca, which city he only visited when some religious ceremony rendered it necessary for him to do so.

The revenue was principally derived from the customs, exactions levied on the pilgrims, and funds arising from his own private estates, collectively amounting annually to rather more than one million sterling. Although in general inaccessible to strangers, I recollect perusing in

some old work which I cannot now gain access to, that about the year 1766 a British vessel of war anchored at Jedda harbour, and the Sheriffe, who was described as a very young man, with a complexion so swarthy as almost to rival that of a negro, ventured on board her; he was received with much respect, and after viewing every portion of the ship with the greatest curiosity and interest, and bestowing liberal marks of his bounty on the crew, took his leave, expressing his high sense of the treatment he had received.

About twenty years before this period, in 1749, a new reformer, of noble birth, started up in the province of Nesjd, and his opinions were now rapidly disseminating over the peninsula. Abdul Wahab, after pursuing his theological studies at Medina, proceeded, as the field best calculated to open his mission, to central Arabia, where the primitive simplicity of the people rendered it more probable that they would adopt his doctrines than those at the holy cities, vitiated as the inhabitants there were by their intercourse with the Turks. His object, by purifying the worship from all the additions which the Imams, the interpreters, and the doctors, had made to it, was to reduce the Koran and the Mahomedan faith to its pris-

tine simplicity.* One of his earliest converts was Daoud, grand sheikh or prince of Darayah, whose example was followed by the several tribes subjected to his rule. A pretext was thus found for attacking their neighbours. Adding the incentive of plunder to the fanaticism of religion, their number rapidly increased; attacking in overwhelming legions, and with startling rapidity, they left their foes no other alternative than death or the immediate profession of their faith.

In 1801, Abduliziz, who had succeeded his father Saoud, after completing the subjugation of the whole of the central provinces, advanced against Imam Hossein, in the vicinity of Bagdat. The inhabitants made but a feeble resistance; it was taken, plundered, and burnt; all the men and male children of every age were then put to the sword; while a priest, in allusion to their classing Hassan and Hossein as co-equals with Mahomed, called out, during the enactment of this horrible butchery, "Kill, strangle all those who give companions to God." Treasures of the magnificent mausoleum of these two sons of Ali, which had been accumulating for ages, were then seized, and the edifice partially destroyed.

* The earliest and best account of the Wahabees is to be found in that remarkable and beautiful work, *Anastasius*.

Mecca offered next the most tempting bait to these ferocious sectaries; but fearing the resentment of the Turkish Pacha at Bagdat, which his expedition against Imam Hossein had called upon him, Abduliziz was unwilling to absent himself from his dominions, but dispatched his son Saoud, with an army of 1,200 men, to reduce that city. In possessing Mecca, the Wahabee chief believed he should have an additional claim to the sovereignty of the surrounding country. After several battles, and the destruction of the town of Tayef, the Sheriffe fled before them, and, finding further resistance unavailing, he capitulated.

On the 26th of April 1803, therefore, the Wahabees entered the holy city. In conformity with the terms of the treaty, they neither plundered nor injured the inhabitants; but, scandalized at the sepulchral honours paid to the descendants of the prophet, they destroyed upwards of two hundred tombs, including that of the venerable Kadijah in the temple of Mahomed.

Coffee and tobacco, as exhilarating stimulants, are held by the Wahabees to be unlawful; the hookhas, or water-pipes, were therefore collected into a heap and burnt, while the use of either was strictly forbidden under the heaviest penalties; they would not, however, then, and

I am told it is the same at present at Darayah, enter a person's house to ascertain if either was used; the public exhibition was only looked to, and both, under the denomination of "wants of a man," continue privately to be sold.

For some time Saoud affected to respect the authority of the Sheriffe; but one morning he issued his edict for every Turkish soldier or merchant to quit the city and proceed to Cairo, while he took upon himself the undivided government. Sensible of the benefit Mecca derived from the annual influx of the pilgrims, he then transmitted his celebrated letter to the Grand Seignor, in which he required that the whole caravan should be composed only of pilgrims, without pomp or trophies, music or women. One or two caravans endeavoured to force their way, but were always defeated; and at length, such were the exactions levied and the interruptions, that, to the great scandal of the Mahomedan religion, several years passed without pilgrims being able to visit the holy city.

About 1810, Mahomed Ali, the present viceroy of Egypt, began to render himself conspicuous; and the Porte consented, as the price of bestowing on him the pachalik of Egypt, that he should rescue the holy cities from the

hands of these sectaries, and completely reduce or destroy them. While preparing his grand army, he despatched a small force, under his son Toussan, to Yembo, from whence he reached the passes of Zafra and Jadeida, where he was defeated with great slaughter, a miserable remnant alone reaching the sea-shore. After much fighting, and varied success, his father reached the holy cities, which he found again in possession of the old Sheriffe, who, anticipating the probable success of the Turks, had again possessed himself of the government, and thrown off the recently adopted faith. The Pacha, however, was not long in discovering that the revenues, in addition to the monopoly he had fixed on the corn, would be sufficient to defray the whole expenses of the war; and under some pretext the Sheriffe was seized at midnight, hurried to a boat, and conveyed to Cairo.

It would have been more consistent with the usual policy pursued by the Turkish pachas had he been removed in another manner; but the Sheriffe, notwithstanding his late tergiversation, carried with him too much of the respect of the inhabitants for this to be attempted with safety: it even extended to Cairo; for the Pacha's directions to keep the Pontiff in close confinement were disregarded, and he was even permitted to

make his escape to Constantinople, where the Porte, already jealous of the Pacha's rising abilities and power, received him with open arms; and he soon procured so many friends in the Divan, that Mahomed Ali found it necessary to quit Arabia and return to Egypt. On his way there, a messenger, despatched for his head, passed him on the road; but having the temerity to return to the city, he shared the fate which Mahomed Ali has inflicted on several other bearers of similar missions. Here, by the liberal distribution of presents to the members of the Divan, his power became more substantially fixed than before. Shortly after this, the old Sheriffe died, leaving two sons, one of which, it is thought, the Porte wished to see established in their father's seat at Mecca, but the power of Mahomed Ali there has hitherto prevented their designs from being carried into effect.

Upon the departure of his father, Ibrahim Pacha took command of the Arabian army, and advanced against Darayah, the head-quarters of the Wahabees, which, after a protracted seige of fifteen months, he stormed and took possession of. Such of the inhabitants who fell into his hands were immediately slain, the walls were razed to the ground, and, in accord-

have, however, since maintained the utmost peace and order. I am told that a robbery in Nesjd is now nearly unknown. One tribe in Yemen, which they instigated to hostilities, have continued to give the Turks much trouble. Several unsuccessful expeditions have been sent against them; the first, consisting of 3,500 men, commanded by an enterprising and gallant officer, debarked at Gomfidah. Two days' march from the beach they met their foes; after a desperate conflict, the action terminated in favour of the Bedowins, who drove the remnant of the Turkish force to their ships, when they considered themselves safe in being able again to reach Jedda.

From the removal of the Sheriffe Ghalib, the power of the Egyptian Pacha has been paramount in the Hedjaz; and, under the salutary regulations enforced by him, the commerce of Jedda continued greatly on the increase, while the number of pilgrims which streamed to Mecca was greater than at any former period. The Bedowins on the route, either awed by his power, or their friendship purchased by presents, no longer molested the caravans; and this portion of Arabia, where his influence at all extended, enjoyed a share of tranquillity which it is probable she had not known for

many centuries. But in March 1831, intelligence arrived at Jedda that Ibrahim Pacha, in his operations against Syria, had sustained a severe defeat beneath the walls of Acre. The ready belief these reports received in the town, and the industry which was manifested in circulating them, evinced the state of public feeling; indeed, the downfall of the Pacha was gladly and confidently predicted.

In this posture of affairs Turkey bel Mass and Zemin Aga, the one a Georgian by birth, and commanding the cavalry, the other an Albanian, in charge of the infantry, made a demand on Kourshed Bey for twenty months' arrears of pay then due to them and their troops. Amidst the latter were seven hundred Albanians, the survivors of two regiments which had been employed during the campaigns against the Wahabees; they then formed the flower of the Pacha's army, but their turbulent disposition, and well-known aversion to the new system of discipline, had induced the Pacha to quarter them here, where, by keeping them largely in arrears, he prevented their desertion. The other applicants, whose case was somewhat singular, amounted, exclusive of the Albanians, to five hundred cavalry and eight hundred infantry; they were

mostly either Georgians or Turks. Kourshed Bey, unable, without the sanction of the Pacha, to defray so large a demand, and unwilling at such a period wholly to refuse it, granted a portion, and continued to temporize, until, after many lengthened discussions, a reference to the Pacha was agreed upon, and the troops quietly awaited his reply. Having reason, however, to suspect the honesty of the governor, they seized one of the forts at Jedda, and promised to repel by violence any treacherous attempt levelled against them. Of those who continued firm in their attachment to the Pacha's interest, there were about a thousand regulars, but they were not considered equal in the field to the rebels. With similar cause of complaint, they continued, through all efforts to seduce them, completely subservient to the will of the governor.

A messenger now arrived from Cairo, bearing a despatch, in which this officer was directed to investigate and settle all their claims; but this messenger was seized by the rebels, who found a second and secret scroll, in which directions were given for seizing the ringleaders and transmitting them to Egypt. They had now gone too far to recede, and it was immediately decided they should seize on the treasury and pay themselves, and they forthwith proceeded

to carry their designs into effect. A small brig belonging to the Pacha was lying in the harbour, laden with a large sum of specie for the purchase of coffee at Mocha; she was seized, and the money distributed. Detachments, at the same time, were sent on board the other vessels, to prevent their sailing. Fully aware how far their future success would depend on the good or ill feeling of the inhabitants, the most peremptory instructions were issued to the troops to refrain from any outrages; instant death was the punishment threatened, and in one case inflicted, for any infringement of them; and Jedda and Mecca presented the scene of two cities, rich in commercial wealth, in the hands of a rebellious and needy soldiery, yet preserving the most perfect order. Turkey bel Mass must have held no ordinary control over the minds of his followers to have maintained such a state of things.

Some skirmishing now took place at Mecca, between the Pacha's force commanded by Ishmael Bey; but after one of the pillars of the Caaba had been shattered by a cannon shot, the latter threw himself into a strong fort, and declined further engagement. There can be little doubt, at the time the mutineers adopted the extreme measure of paying them-

selves, that it was fully intended to have quietly awaited the arrival of the Syrian caravan, and to have decamped with their booty in company with it to Damascus. The Hadj arrived and passed, but brought with it no Syrian caravan, Abdallah the Syrian Pacha's troops being too much occupied in opposing Ibrahim and his Egyptians to spare any portion for this ceremony. To proceed by themselves through the desert, encumbered with their plunder, which would have exposed them to the certain attacks of the various savage hordes on their route, would have been madness. The fall of Jaffa, St. Jean d'Acre, and eventually of Damascus, at this period, gave an unexpected turn to affairs, and at once intimated that the route to Syria was no longer eligible; Mocha, and the coffee country, next presented itself to these soldiers of fortune as offering the best prospect of booty, and the most secure asylum from the vengeance of the exasperated Pacha.

To Mocha, therefore, it was resolved to proceed; and, after plundering the treasury, the magazines of grain, coffee, arms, ammunition, and all the other public property, still respecting that of private individuals, they embarked the whole on board the Pacha's ships, and sailed at once for that port. At the same time, a de-

tachment along-shore kept pace with the ships in their progress down the coast; and Leyt, Gamfida, Hodcidha, and eventually Mocha, successively fell before them.

I landed at the last-mentioned town while they were besieging it, and was admitted (as I wished to see the agent) without scruple through the sea gate. The rebels had drawn themselves up at a most respectable distance from the walls, and, beyond an occasional harmless discharge of musketry, there was nothing to denote what was going on. The town was, however, nearly deserted; some ragged, miserable, half-starved, and wholly-frightened soldiery, with a few old women, who, it would appear, are generally left on these occasions to the conqueror's mercy, together with some Jews, who, it is said, had taken good care to despatch their valuables away, were alone found to occupy this usually populous city. Turkey bel Mass, who was as brave as a lion, could have stormed and taken it whenever he pleased; but having, by the liberal distribution of presents, secured the friendship and assistance of the Assair tribe, he felt too confident of the event to risk his popularity, in the hope his influence would prevent the excesses which his soldiers and these Bedowins would without doubt have committed, had he

entered the city sword in hand. He doubtless also feared the destruction of British property, and had carefully to guard against the recurrence of any act which would have brought him into collision with them. A treaty was therefore entered into, the town peaceably surrendered, and Turkey bel Mass, by virtue of two firmans from the Porte, constituted himself governor.

Deprived of his fleet, the Pacha was placed in a singular dilemma; for the present he had no means of approaching the rebels, and they retained uninterrupted possession of their newly acquired government. In May 1833, Mahomed Ali, anticipating the arrival of the annual Indian ships at Jedda, despatched there a large body of troops, with some ammunition and warlike stores, together with a sufficient sum to hire them for the season as transports; but Turkey bel Mass, when they anchored at Mocha, detained the whole, and that project fell to the ground. But the rebel chief had to encounter other and more formidable difficulties; he found, owing to the merchants at Saana withholding the supply of coffee, that the revenue of Mocha defrayed but a small portion of his expenditure, and that the treasures he had purloined from the Pacha's treasury

were fast disappearing, either to satisfy the rapacity of his troops, who were clamorous for a more stirring life, or in presents to the Assair tribe. It was the latter that finally worked the destruction of the mutineers.

A few weeks previous to this event, one of the Pacha's regular regiments mutinied at Gomfidah, and put their colonel, Ishmael Bey, to death: a private from the ranks advanced towards him on parade, as if to present a petition, and then coolly drew his pistol and shot him dead. I knew the Bey well; he was a distinguished and gallant officer, but latterly his severities had entirely alienated the affections of his troops, who before had given many signal proofs of their devoted attachment to him. No one attempted to seize the murderer; the regiment disbanded, and the greater number proceeded to join Turkey bel Mass. On their way to Mocha they encountered a body of Assair Bedowins, whom they immediately attacked, and slew the greater number. The Bedowin Sheikh, Ali Ib Magatti, demanded that the offenders should be given up to him, which Bel Mass of course was unable to comply with; the result was a formal declaration of hostilities.

On the 2d December the Bedowins attacked and plundered the town of Zabid, and now

advanced against Mocha. On the 9th they had assembled in great numbers to the southward of the walls. Much fear now arose in the town: Bel Mass collected together all the merchants in his house, and placing a guard over them, promised, so long as they would supply him and his troops with provisions, of which there was then a large quantity in the town, they would defend it to their utmost. The Somaulies, natives of the opposite or Nubian coast, to avoid the approaching conflict, had taken up their residence on a small sandy islet which lies off the southern fort. I may here mention, that the harbour of Mocha forms a half-moon, at either crest of which there is a circular tower, which, from their relative position, are called the north and south forts; the town is situated at the extreme depth of the curve, and is defended by a turretted wall, flanked also by square towers, on which are mounted several pieces of artillery.

On the 11th, the Bedowins moved towards the sandy islet, and after killing several, compelled the remainder to flee to their boats. Three females were taken; one, being old, they stripped and left, but the other two they carried off. At four P.M. on the 13th, their numbers having increased to 20,000 men, they com-

menced storming the town. Extending their line in every direction, they attacked at all points, having no scaling-ladders, but climbing the walls like cats. The Turks nobly defended themselves, and their artillery swept off great numbers of the Bedowins; but nowise daunted, their place was immediately supplied by others: and at half-past eight they effected a lodgment on the roofs of some of the houses, and with their long matchlocks began to pick off the Turks very fast. Some great guns were brought to bear on the spot, and the whole party disappeared. The fight still continued with redoubled fury—a second lodgment was made—Turkey bel Mass, and those attached to his person, passing from one part of the town to the other, were fired on by them; and conceiving, from their position on some of the houses in the centre of the town, that the city was carried and all was lost, made their way to the north fort, and throwing themselves into a boat, without oars or sails, put off from the shore to claim the protection of a British vessel of war then lying in the harbour. They were drifting fast to leeward, and must have perished, had not the vessel despatched her boats to their assistance. From intense mental anxiety and exertion, the chief could scarcely stagger up

the side; his face was deadly pale: "I come to claim the protection of the British, will you grant it me?" said he, addressing the captain. "All under that banner," said Capt. N., pointing to the British flag which waved above them, "are safe; fear no treachery here." An assurance not needless in warfare such as this. The chief inquired no more, but sank on the deck.

In the meantime the contest on shore raged unabated; repeated discharges of cannon continued until noon, when it was perceived that the largest fort on the land side had surrendered, and that was followed by a tremendous explosion; a Turk, it is thought, fired a magazine beneath the custom-house, and with thirty or forty of his companions, blew about a thousand Bedowins, who had clustered in great numbers on the spot, into the air. This concluded the affair: every Turk the Bedowins could lay hands on was put to the sword. Several instances of devoted courage which occurred during the siege were related to me. An Arab merchant defended his dwelling for two days after the town was taken; twenty men had fallen by his matchlock, and he had levelled his deadly instrument to number another, when a Sheikh (whose eyes glistened as

he narrated the story), who had effected an entrance through a back window, shot him dead.

The plunder of the town now commenced—it lasted for three days—scarcely an article was left; what they could not remove they destroyed. The bazaar, custom-house, and several other public edifices, were burnt to the ground. The Bedowins seized all the merchants, their women and children, and, stripping them naked, drove them like a flock of sheep to their camp.

When the plunder ceased, the men were set free, but the females were offered for sale; from twenty-five to thirty dollars was demanded for the better looking, and such as they could not dispose of they reserved to take with them to their own country. On the 16th the plundering ceased, and the Bedowins quitted the town, and encamped without the walls, where they offered their plunder for sale. Some amusing instances are related of their ignorance of the several articles they possessed themselves of: a man possessed of a bag of pearls, boiled them, under an impression they were fit for food. The richest Cashmere shawls were offered for sale for two or three dollars. Their mode of discovering the treasure buried in the floors of the houses discovered no little sagacity: they sprinkled the earth with water, and judging it

had recently been disturbed where the water disappeared the soonest, they there commenced a search, and in most instances with success. The Banians were the greatest sufferers; in one house they carried off 40,000 dollars.

For several weeks the dead lay unburied in the streets; and the sight to our officers when we landed, to more senses than one was loathsome and offensive. At length several ships, which the Pacha had contrived to purchase, arrived, bringing with them a letter to the commanding officer of the British squadron from Colonel Campbell, the consul-general in Egypt, intimating that the Home Government had permitted the Pacha to blockade, and if he wished, to take possession of, the town and port. They now landed, took quiet possession of the town, the Bedowins with their plunder marched up into the country, and all was restored to order. Turkey bel Mass and his few surviving companions were transmitted to Bombay, and eventually succeeded in reaching Constantinople in safety. Thus terminated this singular rebellion.

A few words, ere I conclude this paper, on the present state of Yemen. Probably the only part of this vast continent which would tempt the ambition of an invader is the coffee country.

derable state there; his revenue was considerable, and the country settled and flourishing: but their present ruler is described to be little better than a drunken ideot—careless of all passing around, he shuts himself up in his palace, and passes whole days in a state of insensibility. It was by the directions of this monster that the amiable and accomplished German traveller, Seetzen, was cut off by poison; and I learn that some officers of the Indian navy, lately proceeding on a visit to Saana, were very nearly sharing a like fate.

CHAPTER XXI.

Arrive at Tripoli—Set out for Lebanon—Reflections there—Visit Baalbec.

I REACHED the town of Tripoli without further incident of importance, and took up my abode in a monastery of Capuchins, where I received much hospitality. Tripoli is thought to have derived its name from being formed of three ports, all situated at but a short distance from each other. Its present harbour, about two miles from the town, though formerly deep and capacious, is now fast filling up; it is formed by a tongue of high land, jutting in a semicircular form into the sea, and connected to the main by a low isthmus; here there are two forts, both requiring much repair.

The town is situated on the slope of a hill, is walled round, and may contain about five thousand inhabitants: it is separated into an upper and lower portion; in the former there is an elegant mosque, which was formerly a Chris-

tian church, and several other religious edifices belonging to various sects. The town is watered by means of a small mountain rivulet, which holds its course between the two divisions, the communication with either being maintained by a stone bridge: an aqueduct enables the inhabitants to conduct it to the very highest rooms of their dwellings. Hence it flows over the surrounding country, and waters extensive plantations of fruit trees and corn fields. Mulberry trees are very numerous; and on their leaves are fed the silkworms, the produce of which forms the only export from Tripoli.

After passing a few days at Tripoli, I resumed my garb as a Turkish soldier, hired a horse for a few dollars, and set out to visit the Cedars of Lebanon. My route lay through a narrow valley, the gorge of which opens just above the town; in the centre flows the rivulet which waters the town. The ascent to a Takea of Dervishes is very steep and precipitous; here I halted for a few minutes, partook of a cup of coffee, and then resumed my journey. Hence I contrived to pass several neat villages, picturesquely situated amidst groves of mulberry trees, to the tending of which the inhabitants were busily engaged. Towards sunset I arrived at the village of Eden, and endeavoured in vain to

most comfortable and grateful slumber. Towards daylight I was roused by the baker, who came with a bundle of sticks and a lighted faggot in his hands, to again heat the oven for its day's work.

From some distance below I had obtained a glimpse of the cedars; but so much in mountain regions is the magnitude of distant objects diminished by the clearness of the atmosphere, that they then appeared but dwarfish shrubs. I was, therefore, when I reached them, about three P. M., not a little surprised at their vast size. The whole form a group about half a mile in circuit, situated to the left of the road, which lays over the mountain. The largest trees are now only ten in number,* but there are about seventy of a goodly size, and perhaps a hundred smaller ones. The former throw forth three or four trunks from one root, where their girth is not unfrequently thirty feet. Such of the older cedars as have fallen, lie stripped of their bark, bleached by the action of the atmosphere, and mouldering away: on such portions of the bark which remained I observed several inscriptions, some as far back as the fifteenth century. Both Moslems and Chris-

* "The trees of the forest shall be so few that a child may write them."—*Chap.* x. 19.

tians hold these trees in great veneration: the former manufacture their timber into beads and chaplets; the latter, I observe, have carved the cross on their bark, and cut below a small niche, into which a light has been placed while they were performing their vesper prayers.

For the present all was, however, solitude. I had no guide; and collecting together a few withered sticks and leaves, drew forth my flint and steel, without which I never travel, and in a few minutes had a blazing fire before me; my horse, fastened to one of the branches of the trees, was beside me, and shared the only provender I had provided, a small skin of dates. I know not from what cause, but I felt, for almost the first time in my travels, low and melancholy. I stretched myself on the ground before the fire, and took a retrospect of my wanderings since I had quitted India. What strange scenes had I not encountered!—what a variety of adventures had I not met with! My thoughts turned to home and friends; years had now passed since I had heard from them; and I appeared to myself an isolated being, without home, affections, or ties. The sun had set, and the moon shone forth in all its splendour; its beams, arrested by the foliage of the tree under which I sat, fell in chequered light

around; its rays illumined that snow-capped peak with a brightness almost dazzling. Suddenly, however, the whole face of nature was changed—light fleecy clouds arose from the eastern horizon, gradually increasing in depth of colouring as they reached the zenith—the moon was hidden; the breeze first in fitful gusts moaned through the branches, but now gradually increased in strength: my fire was extinguished, and I endeavoured to take shelter from the coming storm behind a projecting rock. At times it blew a perfect hurricane; the huge and gigantic arms of the cedars swung heavily to and fro, with a moaning noise; thunder rolled over the lofty peaks above, and shook the ground on which we stood; huge masses of rock, and occasionally a tree, torn from its roots, were hurried down the almost perpendicular sides of the mountains; lightnings flashed over the deeply-wooded ravines below; while the rain, with all the fury of a tropical shower, fell in torrents, and fed rather than allayed the fury of the storm. My horse, snorting with affright, repelled all my efforts to soothe him, and at length burst his bridle and made off. I had no alternative but to seek shelter within a hollow in the tree, and there I passed the night.

Towards morning the storm took off, and the sun rose and lighted up all around with splendour. I found my horse grazing in a small grassy dell beneath, and easily managed to secure him. As I was tired of Lebanon and its cedars, I determined next to trace my way to Baalbec: I had constructed, from native information, a rough sketch of the route, and had nothing to fear from robbers, since I had nothing to lose. From the summit of Lebanon I obtained an extensive view of the plain of Cele-Syria, but from the great altitude I had attained, it was impossible to discern minute objects—the whole appeared covered with a haze. The mountains of Anti Lebanon were in the distance; the wind blew fierce and cutting over the face of the mountains; and the thermometer, which in Tripoli would have been ninety or one hundred, there stood at forty-five degrees. From this ridge I commenced my descent, and in a couple of hours reached the village of Dahr-el Homar, which consists of about a dozen miserable huts. A plump and somewhat handsome female came forth from one, and presented me with a bowl of milk; I gave her a few piasters, and directed her to get a supper prepared for me in the evening, which she cheerfully promised to do. Near this com-

mences the plains styled Berar, over which I rode at a good round pace until about noon, when I reached the city of Baalbec.

I have little to say respecting these remarkable ruins: the magnitude of the stones employed in their construction, the beauty and simplicity of the design, impress the beholder with awe and admiration. Both this city and Palmyra, doubtless, owe their origin to that period when the trade between the eastern and western world flowed by that channel, and both declined when its current changed round the Cape of Good Hope.

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